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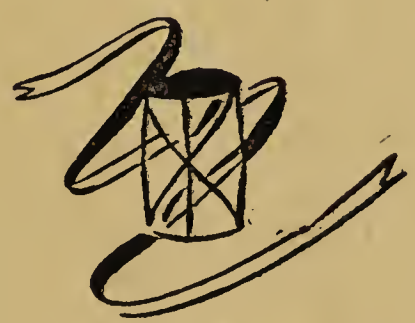
West Gardiner's Hundred Years



CENTENNIAL

1850 — 1950

West Gardiner, Maine

GEN

WEST GARDINER'S HUNDRED YEARS

By Bud Martin

Published by the Town of West Gardiner on the occasion of the first Centennial of the town, celebrated August 19, 1950.

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REPORT

To the Citizens of
West Gardiner, Maine:

We have prowled the attics and burrowed in the cellars, as directed, and we have sought the magic stereoscope to bring the fathers back in three dimensions, lifelike, for you to view.

And we think the magic must be somewhat dimmed, for we found no pictures of saints or sinners all in black and white,

But mottled people sometimes good, often bad; sometimes happy, often sad, like you.

HISTORY COMMITTEE
JOSEPH E. WARE, *Chairman*
BUD MARTIN
KARL R. COLLINS
LLOYD TOWLE
A. D. COLE
VIOLA RICE MARTIN
ERNEST WILES
EDWARD BYRON

HAROLD C. GOODWIN
BASIL U. GORDON
SIDNEY M. GRAY
Selectmen, ex officio

For the Century Ending
1950

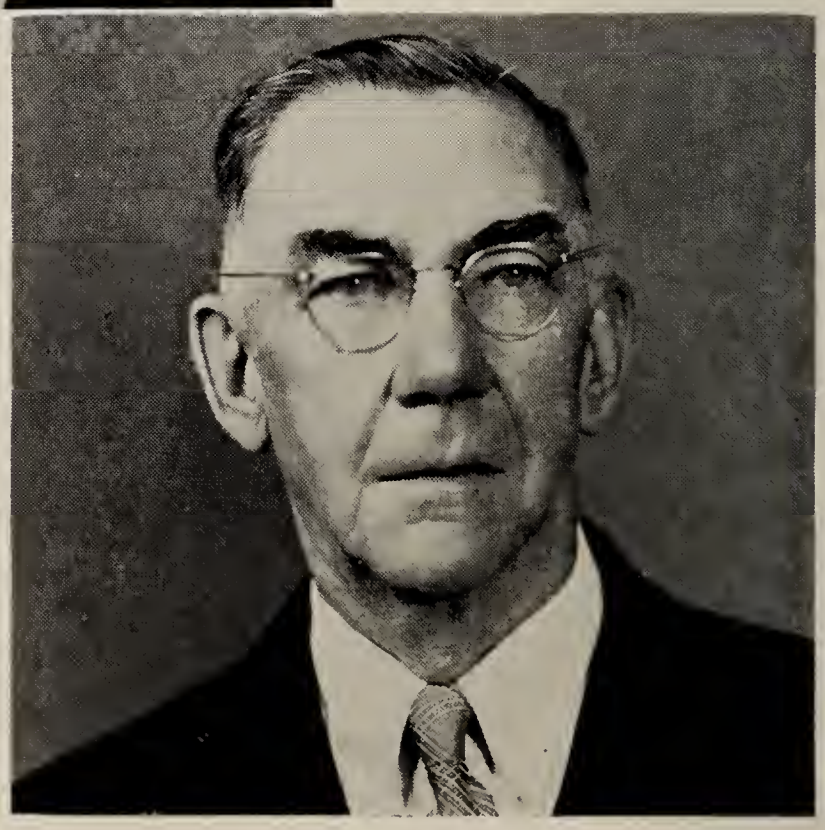
SELECTMEN OF WEST GARDINER, 1950

1st Selectman

HAROLD C. GOODWIN

2nd Selectman

BASIL V. GORDON



3rd Selectman

SIDNEY M. GRAY

PRE-HISTORIC

Once upon a time no rain or snow fell upon the fields of West Gardiner, nor any sunshine, nor was there any land whatsoever upon which to pay interest and taxes.

This was in the division of time known as the Tertiary Age, which was a very long time ago indeed, when all the neighborhood was many fathoms deep beneath the Atlantic Ocean, now called, and there was no Town Hall at Lower French's Corner, nor anyone to stand up on his hind legs in it and argue save some fishes and a few relatives of the Barnacle Family who were not even registered voters and to whom no one would have paid the slightest attention, anyway.

The records of these dismal times are written in the blue clay of West Gardiner, in the form of marine life remains. Deep down, this blue clay is salty to the taste, so it is said, and this is another indication that once it was the ooze of the ocean's floor.

Things weren't much better even after the ocean receded, for there followed a period when ice covered the land to a depth of many hundreds of feet, and the great glaciers held their ponderous parades over the granite ledges, grinding huge boulders to fine powder as casually as your grandmother grated nutmegs. And that is where West Gardiner's gray clay came from, the wise men say.

Such was the condition of our town in pre-historic times.

HISTORIC BEGINNINGS

A few thousand years later land plants began to grow in the clay and the rock weatherings and these lived and died and formed a soil and trees grew and men came from somewhere, and that is when the very early history of West Gardiner, or any other place, really begins—with the coming of man.

West Gardiner, which is to say the territory in which it is included, has been claimed by at least five nations within the past four hundred-fifty years. It has been part and parcel of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the State of Maine; it has been within the counties of York, Lincoln and Kennebec and the towns of Gardinerston, Pittston and Gardiner. But it has voted the Democratic ticket only once or twice.

Spain and Portugal claimed the New World, which included West Gardiner, after the discoveries of Columbus. England put in its claim soon after, by virtue of John Cabot's voyage. Whereupon King Francis I of France declared he "would like to see the clause in Adam's will" which made the American continent the exclusive property of these claimants and, in 1524, ordered his own exploration of the coast and named the entire land New France.

The fifth race or nation of men who claimed West Gardiner's surrounding territory in those early times were the resident Indians, who often welcomed the white men with true State of Maine hospitality, even as we natives are being exhorted to welcome tourists, today, and we suspect there may be a lesson in this somewhere.

The Indians were one of four tribes of the nation of Abnakis or Abenakis and some historians assert that the name Kennebec has its derivation in the name of this tribe, which is Canabis. Others mention the term Quinibeque, or Kinibeki, meaning serpent, or monster, which the Indians gave to the writhing waters of Hellgates, near Bath.

The name Cobbosseecontee, given to the lake and to the stream which partially bounds West Gardiner south and west today, also is of Indian origin, as you know. Variations of the word appearing in old records are: Cabbassa, Cabbassa-contee, Comaseconte, Cabbassaguntiag, Cobbosseecontiquoke, Cabbassaguntiquoke, Cobbiseconte. These are derivatives of the Indian word for sturgeon. Copsecook is another name associated with what we, today, call simply—"Cobbossee," which is about seventeen miles long, from Cobbossee Lake to the Kennebec River at Gardiner, and used to have some fish in it.

These rivers, the Kennebec and the Cobbossee, played very important parts in the drama which is the history of West Gardiner, as we shall see. Centuries ago men walked not when they could ride, even as you and I, and the Kennebec was a broad highway for the first vehicles of the white men in America, which were ships — both English and French.

The contest between England and France for possession of America delayed the settling of places like West Gardiner many years. There were wars and rumors of wars, with the Indians for the most part siding with the French against the English. Hundreds of white settlers were killed by Indians in what is now Maine. This and nearby territory changed hands nine times in 127 years, until possession was decided in favor of the English and the fall of Quebec erased the name of New France from the map of North America in 1759.

Fur and fish were the valuables which lured the first traders and the earliest settlers into the Kennebec Valley. The New England colonists took 20 hogsheads of beaver from the Kennebec in 1634, most of which had been obtained by trade with Indians. Sturgeon from the mouth of the Cobbossee was another important early export. There was great potential wealth in the timber, but it could be harvested only when the land was settled sufficiently to provide lumberjacks and sawmills. There were white oaks eighteen and one-half feet in circumference and pine and hemlock to match them in the Kennebec Valley, so it is said.

Settling of the new lands was under the control of great English companies, like corporations, who derived their authority from grants or patents bestowed by the English kings. The first of these was a sizeable chunk of pasture and woodlot granted by James I in 1606 to the London Company and to the Plymouth Company. It contained all of the land in America between South Carolina and New Brunswick, from ocean to ocean. The deeds to West Gardiner farms are based upon this and subsequent grants made by English Kings.

Also there were many Indian deeds to Kennebec land, one transaction having been made at the bargain price of "two skins of liquor and one of bread for more than a million acres of land." However, the Indian titles didn't hold much water because the tribesmen were nothing but poor, benighted heathens after all, and couldn't possibly expect to have any say in the disposition of territory to which their only claim was that they had possessed and occupied it for more years than their fathers could remember.

Anyway, it was argued that the Indians meant to convey merely hunting and fishing rights—not title to the land itself. If there's any lesson at all in history it's that weaker nations have no business standing in the path of "progress."

We haven't space, here, to chronicle the bickerings over ownership of the Kennebec by succeeding generations of English grantees, patentees, proprietors, purchasers, squatters, traders, settlers, colonists, big companies, little companies, rich men, poor men, honest men and rascals. Litigation over Kennebec lands was a cause for rejoicing among lawyers for many, many decades. The territory wherein West Gardiner now thrives eventually came under the ownership of "The Proprietors of the Kennebec Purchase from the late Colony of New Plymouth" in 1753. The land comprised approximately one and one-half million acres, extending from the Wesserunsett River southerly to the north line of Woolwich on the east side and the north line of Topsham on the west side of the Kennebec river. It was fifteen miles wide on each side of the Kennebec—thirty miles wide in all.

There were many ants at the picnic of the early real estate men, or proprietors, as they were called. They were trying to sell a wilderness which they never had seen and which never had been surveyed. Often squatters took possession of land, without an aye, yes or no from anyone. Many of these were men who came to trap and hunt moose and who remained just long enough to sell the land they had no title to to later comers. This seems to have tended toward promotion of unkind words and unpleasant incidents. More than once, gunpowder spoke in the arguments over titles.

Things didn't really begin to take shape in the West Gardiner neighborhood until Dr. Sylvester Gardiner came to town. Dr. Gardiner was a Boston physician born in Rhode Island in 1707, who made money out of the drug business before drugstores put their pills in the back room and began to sell linoleum, hardware and baby carriages. He was one of the stockholders in the Kennebec Company and in his early fifties when he came here.

Ye Olde Doc Sylvester was no absentee landlord. He moved right up here on the Kennebec and lived, as a sort of resident manager of the property. He was so successful at getting settlers upon the land that the company granted him extensive properties at one time or another, until he is said to have owned in the neighborhood of twelve thousand acres in and near West Gardiner. Much of it was in 32,000-acre chunks with a one-mile frontage along the Kennebec and a depth of five miles of wilderness.

Dr. Gardiner purchased a sloop and established what was probably the first fairly regular transportation line and means of communication with the outside world. Then he moved in some skillful workmen from Falmouth and built sawmills at the Cobbossee's mouth and the first gristmill in a radius of thirty miles or more. This was right around the year 1760; when this territory was set aside from the old county of York and became a part of Lincoln County. Wave after wave of bloody Indian warfare had reddened the waters of the Kennebec. But now the French and Indian War was all but over. The French were beaten at Quebec and the Indians decimated. The time was ripe for settlement, in earnest.

The territory upon which we now focus our attention is the old plantation of Gardinerston, or Gardinerstown, which comprised the present areas of

Pittston, Randolph, Gardiner and West Gardiner, and which was named for Dr. Sylvester Gardiner.

Dr. Gardiner's policy of regular communication and of building mills and stores to accommodate prospective settlers, as well as a "Great-House" to serve as a tavern, very promptly began to pay dividends. Whereas it had previously been almost impossible to obtain bona fide settlers, Gardiner was able to pick and choose persons whom he thought would become good citizens and assets to the community.

Meat was no problem to these early settlers, for the country abounded in game, and the rivers in fish. A catch of "sixteen noble salmon, one Sunday morning before breakfast" is recorded.

Some prices of early times were: paper, 8 cents per sheet; boards $5.00 per thousand; corn $5.00 per bushel; shoes $15.00 per pair; butter $1.33 per pound.

Weather bothered, then as now. The years 1761 and 1762 were dry, with no rain from June to the last of August. "Almost all vegetation was burned up, and the woods in all directions were on fire." (Hanson)

Cash money was scarcer than hen's teeth. Trade among the settlers was largely by barter of services and home-produced goods. To some extent they lived "by taking in each other's washing," is one way of expressing it.

Probably, when all is said and done, one of the most valuable acquisitions of Dr. Gardiner was the water power rights to Cobbossee Stream, which remained in the Gardiner family for many years and which still are, and always have been, a prolific source for disputation in West Gardiner. Development of the Cobbossee's water power is unquestionably one of the chief reasons for the rapid growth of Gardinerston. As Kingsbury and Deyo put it: "Gardiner city is the natural product of the water power of the Cobbosseecontee river. It was organized by the forces of nature, and is run by the force of gravity."

Apparently there were no hard and fast standards of size or price for the lots sold to early settlers. Lots near a mill privilege were generally of five or ten acres. Further away from the stream they were more likely to be one, two or more hundred acres. Five to ten shillings was the cash price for a lot, at one time.

Others acquired land by fulfilling an agreement to build a house twenty feet square "and 7 feet stud"; and to "reduce three acres to tillage within three years, and work two days each year on the ministerial lot."

The main idea, in this period, was to get settlers who would come, and stay, and clear the land.

And she grew, and she grew, and she grew, Olde Gardinerstowne did, until a census taken in 1764 disclosed that of the 24,000 souls then resident in Maine, two hundred of them were in "Cabbassa," one of the olde names for Gardiner, and "Cushnoc," which was the olde, olde name for Augusta.

"About the year 1766-7 there was a season of great scarcity. They made dried moose meat a substitute for bread, and they were destitute of vegetable food for a long time. When the ice broke up some of the settlers went down to the mouth of the river (Kennebec) in bateaux, and waited there until the first coaster appeared. This was done frequently afterwards, in times of scarcity." (Hanson)

Three years later army worms made their first appearance. According to Hanson, "they devoured all before them, and moved over houses rather than pass around them."

In 1772 Dr. Jonathan Hicks "was the first physician who ventured to settle here. He found the people so healthy or so poor that he went back to Massachusetts, whence he came."

Two years later another medicine man, Dr. Robert Taggart came to town with his brother, John. John was attacked by wolves while working in the woods with an axe. "He leaned his back against a tree and fought them so long and so well, and laid so many of them dead around him that the rest retreated."

Dr. Taggart "was favored with quite a practise at one time. He had one unfailing remedy in some cases. When ordinary means of cure failed, he would cause a black cat to be flayed and would wrap his patient in the reeking skin. He was willing to insure a cure after that was done." Hanson fails to record whether the cat was insured, too.

And then she grew some more. In spite of droughts, crop failures, army worms and quack doctors she grew, Gardinerstowne did. Settlers came, trotted out a song, and received their grant of land for the singing thereof. Some fulfilled the conditions of the grant and obtained title, others felled a few trees and moved on, and Dr. Gardiner had the land to sell over again. There is every indication that he tried to treat everyone fairly.

For fifteen years there was comparative peace upon the Kennebec. And then the stupid acts of George III and his British Parliament generated enough heat to set off spontaneous combustion. The British marched on Lexington. Paul Revere rode. The colonists who had been denied their rights as Englishmen now sought to cast off the yoke of England.

They were times that tried men's souls. Most of the settlers favored independence; a minority were for the king. Many Tories departed for England or Canada, among them Dr. Gardiner. Those who remained had a hard time of it. Some were tarred and feathered. Hanson observes that "it took about as much courage and fortitude to be a Tory, then, as it did to be a Whig."

Dr. Gardiner's property was confiscated, and some of it sold at public auction. Arnold went up the Kennebec on his way to Quebec, stopping long enough to acquire some bateaux built of green lumber from Major Reuben Colburn. It is reported that soldiers confiscated some nails to build these boats when a Gardinerstown storekeeper, who was a Tory, refused to sell them at less than twice the regular price.

The town was poor in money but it offered to go into debt for its share of the costs of war, and it supplied its share of men to fight, though it didn't get credit for it, at first.

The War for Independence ended in 1781. Dr. Sylvester Gardiner did not return here to live. He practised "physic and surgery" in Newport, R. I., until his death in 1786. Most of his real property was restored to his grandson and heir, Robert Hallowell, to whom he willed the bulk of the Kennebec property on condition that he take the name of Gardiner which he did, becoming Robert Hallowell Gardiner by act of legislature in 1802.

There was confusion and hardship for the first few years while the new nation was cutting its teeth. There was a terrific deflation of the currency, forty dollars of currency being worth only one of specie. Tea was $19 per pound; corn $35 a bushel; molasses $16 a gallon; West Indies rum $26 per gallon; coffee $3 per pound; salt $45 for the bushel; wheat the same; hay $200 per ton, in Continental currency.

The year 1779 was a memorable one for Gardinerston, which took a new name and experienced a "terrible tornado which swept the entire state. The darkness was terrific, and was relieved by such lightning as was never seen before."

This year the Plantation of Gardinerston, sometime known as Gardinerstown, was incorporated into the Town of Pittston, without change of boundaries. Change in the name is attributed to resentment at Dr. Gardiner's British sympathies during the Revolution. The new name honored the family of John Pitt, which had been prominent in the settlement of the portion of the town east of the Kennebec. John Pitt was a member of the Massachusetts Legislature and brought in the bill of incorporation.

The year 1779 is notable, too, because it is the first reference we find in the available histories to the name of West Gardiner. "About this time West Gardiner was settled by Tibbetts, James Dunlap and others," Hanson states.

James Dunlap "lived latterly about a mile below Purgatory Bridge in a logging camp built by Benjamin Shaw," according to Hanson. It is understood that he also lived upon the Neck, at one time.

Clason recounts this tale of the Dunlap family: "In January, 1796, Mr. Dunlap with his wife and youngest child went visiting to Litchfield Corner, leaving six children at home, the oldest, a daughter, aged 13 years, and the next a son aged 11 years. On a Tuesday morning the children were coasting, sliding down the yard in front of their cabin out upon the stream. They slid near a fallen tree that lay in the ice, when the sled broke through and the four oldest children were drowned. The two saved were Samuel aged six years, and Betsy aged four years. These two little children stayed in the cabin alone until the following Friday when their parents returned, there being no one who knew of the sad accident until that time. To add to the sufferings of the little ones a heavy snow storm came up Wednesday and put out their fire. These two children were the only ones of James and Elizabeth (Potter) Dunlap, that lived to grow up."

The Tibbettses referred to by Hanson probably were Solomon Tibbetts and his son Edward, who went to the Neck, or thereabouts, from Gardiner, in 1774, according to Clason. Solomon was born in Lebanon, N. H., in 1710, and was one of the early settlers of Gardinerston, where Edward was born in 1762. Solomon had twelve children. Edward had a dozen, too, but he was married twice.

The Neck is painful to historians endeavoring to name the earliest settlement in West Gardiner. This interesting region is unquestionably one of the first in town to become the home of white men. But it was a part of Litchfield until 1856, when it saw the light and petitioned to be included in the Town of West Gardiner. It seems that both towns can claim these early settlers. And they do.

FRIEND'S CHURCH

The Neck comprises 1760 acres, of which 590 are upon islands or beneath the waters of Lake Cobbossee; and a famous bog which has successfully contested the right of way with many generations of road builders.

Harold Goodwin, Selectman, and Fred Trafton, old-time lumberman and West Gardiner business man, can put up a pretty convincing argument for their theory that the granite of which Christ's Church in Gardiner was built, about 1819, came from the old Pinkham lot on the Neck. There certainly was one whopper of a quarry, for these parts, near Cobbossee Stream, on the old Pinkham place, and the remaining ledges are of the same brown tint as the granite of the church. It is known that the stone for the church was transported to Gardiner down Cobbossee Stream on scows or "gunloes" and that a canal some five hundred feet in length was cut across the shallows at the foot of Pleasant Pond, to facilitate its passage.

Across the Neck Road and still on old Pinkham property is a smaller quarry, of the more common gray granite. The Pinkham place is now owned by Charles Mason.

Quarrying was one of the early industries of West Gardiner, in a small way. A few worked at the trade of stonecutting here, and there was sufficient trade in the product to require a "Surveyor of Stone" as one of the town officers. And that's another thing that is no more.

There are the remains of two small quarries within a couple of hundred yards, east and north of the Community House on High Street. And there are others in town.

There was also a "cordwainer" in town once; one Aaron Haskell, who bought what later became the Merle Fuller place below French's Corner on the Hallowell Road in 1805 for $500 and made shoes of cordovan leather, which was called "cordwain," which is a very flavorful word, the like of which is seldom met up with in these latter days, which is a great pity.

Returning to granite: It is interesting to observe that most of the great slabs which are the foundations for some of the chimneys and so many of the houses and bridge abutments of the town were produced locally. Some of these were cut from granite boulders in the fields—not quarried from ledges. There is one of these boulders on the farm of Harry Spear, on the Benson Road, with the drill-marks in it, where the wedges were driven to split off a slab that will last as long as the pyramided stones of Ancient Egypt. Other farms have these boulders too, and cattle and owners have had to walk out around them for generations.

But we're getting ahead of the story.

In 1799 Kennebec was established as the sixth county of Maine, and old Pittston forsook old Lincoln and became part of the new county.

Another important date in the history of West Gardiner is 1803, when Robert Hallowell Gardiner became twenty-one and engaged Solomon Adams to survey what is now the town, excepting the Neck, marking out roads and numbering farm lots, and starting the greatest real estate boom West Gardiner has ever seen.

By this time George Washington had served his two terms as the nation's first president; John Adams had followed for one term and had been succeeded by Thomas Jefferson. There had almost been another war with Great Britain and one with France. The Federal Government had been installed in Washington. We were a nation, and we were proud of it, and we had a great big chip on our shoulder to prove it.

It was a lusty, turbulent era of rapid growth and almost explosive expansion. It was a preview of the rush to settle the West, which was to come decades later. No need to wheedle settlers to come here, now. Everyone wanted land. Young R. H. Gardiner had the land, and he wasted no time in putting it on the market.

EARLY LAND SALES

The following account of land sales by R. H. Gardiner in what is now West Gardiner were exhumed from old county records. They are in no sense offered as a complete account of the transactions of 1803, and persons familiar with the amount of time and effort required to disinter such material from the dust of almost a century and one-half will understand why.

Jeremiah Wakefield bought the first lot west of the present Gardiner Line, on the south side of High Street, November 23, 1803. It contained 103¾ acres and sold for what was then the high price of $882.00, which suggests that it contained buildings, cleared fields, or some such special advantage.

Three days later Richard Clay bought 107 acres nearby for $832.00—another high price.

Thomas Dearborn paid $653 for a one hundred acre lot across from what was the late Stella Blaisdell's residence on High Street, December 20, 1803.

On December 30 of the same year Benjamin Chamberlain purchased 153 acres, being Lot Number 40 on the Solomon Adams Survey, situated about two miles west of Gardiner town line on the south side of High Street. The price was $198.00, and included the privilege of cutting as many trees as he wanted to, and picking up rocks and piling them into fences all the day long; and these privileges were transferred unto himself and to his heirs or assigns to have and to hold forever, or until he should become good and sick and tired of it and should sell out and go back to town where he could earn an easier living, maybe.

The transactions were for cash when Gardiner could get it. But mostly there was a mortgage, for the preponderance of West Gardiner's founders had nothing but their shrewd heads, their strong hands, their large families, and they worked all three for all they were worth, to get hold of a piece of land, improve it, and hang onto it. Sometimes the settler went into debt for the full value of the land, the seller taking a mortgage for the full selling price.

One of these was John Clark, who gave a mortgage of $415, which was the purchase price of Lot Number 10, at French's Corner. He was unable to meet the terms of the mortgage and lost the place, together with whatever improvements he had made. In 1819 R. H. Gardiner sold a quitclaim deed to the property to Robert Towle for $195, and it later came into the possession of Robert's brother, Nicholas Towle. Today, Gustaf Johnson owns this property, which is just west of the Grange Hall.

One method of clearing land in earliest times was to notch the trunks, deeply, in the area to be cleared. When a windy day came a windward tree was felled and this toppled all the others, like tenpins. The trunks and limbs were allowed to dry and then burned where they lay. One method of pulling big stumps was to chain a log to the stump and employ oxen at the other end, thus gaining leverage and a twisting force that was irresistible. The stumps were burned or piled in fence rows.

Of course, the trees were made into lumber, when mills were accessible. Or into cordwood when this was practicable.

Frankly, we don't know who built the first house in West Gardiner, nor when, nor where. Undoubtedly it was built of logs and probably it was somewhere on or near the banks of Cobbossee Stream, for this was the highway when the roads were mere blazed trails through the woods. Early travel was by boat in summer, by skates or sled in winter.

There are several old cellars along the Cobbossee, from which the houses were moved when the Pond Road was built. The number of houses and even larger buildings in West Gardiner which have been moved from their original sites is astonishing. It is almost as if the place had been inhabited by a race of turtles, who took their houses with them wherever they chose to move. Churches, stores, schoolbuildings, dwellings—even the Grange Hall aren't where they used to be, at all, at all.

And the roads have been relocated, so that when you see a house out in the middle of a field and wonder why they built it there, the chances are

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that it was on the old road before it was moved. The Charles Curtis place on High Street is an example of this. So is the old Rhoades place which perches above the present road at Merrill's Corner.

There are roads in West Gardiner now that were not here before, and there are others that used to be here and are now on their way to being forgotten. The old Buffee Landing Bridge is gone. Monkey Lane is no longer a public way. Ware Lane is no more. The old Dr. Small road grows up to grass.

The link of road between the Fairbanks Cemetery and the Town House was not even thought of when Solomon Adams made his survey. And there was no road past Spear's Corner, toward Horseshoe Pond, nor any Babcock Bridge. A road was laid out from near the Ware farm on the Town House Road, westerly toward the Marston place, and Cobbossee Stream, but was never built.

There wasn't even a Horseshoe Pond, except during the spring freshets, until the height of the dam at New Mills was raised about 1900 and a controversy was started which has continued even up to and including the present day, and about which we shall have more to say later.

The early homes of West Gardiner were largely constructed of local materials. We have seen where the granite foundations came from. You may be sure that the lumber was usually cut on the place, too. Some of the older houses still have traces of the brick fireplaces that were used for heating and the dutch ovens that were used for cooking, before stoves were common.

Bricks to build chimneys, ovens, fireplaces and even whole houses were made out of West Gardiner clay. There was a brick kiln at Merrill's Corner. There was one in the field back of what was the old Pope place on High Street, which later became known as the Arthur Gosline Farm, now occupied by Harold T. Soiett, and is built of brick produced right where it was used. It is believed that the brick for the nearby Community House and for Alfred Merrill's house came from the Pope kiln. The Josephine Trafton house on Green's Hill, Horseshoe Pond Road, was built of brick made on the place. And there were other kilns in town, too.

The popular indignation which had resulted in the town's taking the name of Pittston had in less than a quarter of a century dissipated to such an extent that once again the name of Gardiner was given to a town. This time it meant a parting of the ways. The portion of Old Pittston which was upon the eastern side retained the name it had acquired in 1779, while the part upon the Kennebec's western shore became the Town of Gardiner, by act of legislature, in 1803. After the separation Pittston had approximately 131 polls, Gardiner about 162. The Gardiner poll tax was $1.59, the total amount of taxes $875.62.

One of the first acts of the new Town of Gardiner in town meeting was: "Voted that one dollar be allowed per day for a man, and the same for a yoke of oxen, calculating 10 hours of faithful labor for a day's work." The town voted to oppose construction of a bridge across the Kennebec, "as calculated to injure the coasting trade and to destroy that inland navigation which nature had made," and so did the Town of Pittston. Modern drawbridges had not yet been invented.

West Gardiner was not the only place to have a real estate boom in 1803. It was in this year that what is probably the biggest purchase of land in all

history was made, when the United States bought a million-or-so square miles west of the Mississippi from France in what is called the Louisiana Purchase. The price was eleven and one-quarter million dollars, and the new country gave bonds for the sum, just as West Gardiner's settlers were going into debt for land. In both cases, the results seem to have justified the means.

The United States became the greatest maritime nation on earth. Ships were built all up and down the Kennebec, many in Gardiner, and the local yards furnished work for West Gardiner settlers, some of whom were ship carpenters. Robert Fulton sailed from Jersey up the Hudson River to Albany in the first successful steamboat, the Clermont, and this was to help bring good times and an era of prosperity to West Gardiner farmers, later.

England and France were at war again. Both seized American ships. For a time it looked as if we might fight France. But in 1812 we made up our minds to fight England because she had impressed American sailors into the British Navy.

Gardiner furnished more than 122 officers and men, some of whom were from West Gardiner. General Henry Dearborn, a local boy, was made commander-in-chief of the Army. The American brig Enterprise whipped the Boxer in the famous sea fight off Portland and the American and the British commanders were buried, side by side, in a Portland cemetery. The British established control on the Penobscot in 1814. The citizens of Gardiner felt none too secure. The British burned the Capitol Buildings in Washington.

Hard times came with the end of the war in 1814. The country was burdened with a debt of one hundred million dollars. Banks suspended specie payment. But business and industry in Gardiner progressed just the same. Agitation was started for the separation of Maine from Massachusetts. Both Gardiner and Pittston favored this.

Meanwhile Robert Hallowell Gardiner had achieved a settlement with all of the squatters who had settled on his grandfather's property without title during the Revolution, or forced them off the land. Settlers continued to flock to West Gardiner.

POSTMASTERS

In 1820 Maine was admitted to the Union, a full-fledged state. In 1828 the first West Gardiner post office was established in the home of Aaron Haskell, the "cordwainer," at French's Corner, and he was the first postmaster in town. His duties were not overly burdensome, for there were only three mails per week, and no Sears Roebuck catalogues to deliver. Come to think of it, he didn't deliver the mail, anyway. In those days one had to get his own mail, at the post office. Haskell's office was on the old post route from Augusta to Freeport. West Gardiner didn't get daily mail service until about 1875. Rural Free Delivery, with mail brought to the door of country people, wasn't authorized until 1896. The U. S. Parcel Post System was not introduced until 1912.

In addition to Aaron Haskell, postmasters at French's Corner have been: Aaron Haskell, Jr., Daniel Marston, George W. French, John W. Herrick, Francis W. Brann, William P. Haskell, William D. Marston, Albert W. De-

Fratus, Mrs. Helen M. French, Frank E. Towle, and possibly others. Name of this post office has been, at various times, West Gardiner and French's Corner.

Prior to 1857 there was a post office at Spear's Corner, situated in the home of Postmaster Joseph L. Spear. The office was called West Gardiner Center Post Office. Spear was succeeded, after three or four years, by Moses Rogers, who was appointed by Buchanan. According to Kingsbury & Deyo: "Party feeling ran high in the neighborhood and it was not long until there appeared to be no use for a post office or a Democratic postmaster at the Center."

After this most of the families in this neighborhood had boxes in the Gardiner Post Office, and whoever went to town got the mail for the neighbors. It was kept in a wooden salt box at the home of Augustus Littlefield at Spear's Corner, and was a prolific source of neighborhood news. Later, Oliver Herbert Small built up a business for himself by contracting for daily delivery of mail, plus a reasonable amount of shopping and running errands around Gardiner for folks along the road at twenty-five cents per week, apiece. In a time when travel was mostly in farm wagons drawn by oxen or draft horses it was worth the money to avoid a trip to town for mail every day.

At the very outset it became apparent that the new development would become a rural, rather than an industrial community. In all the miles of West Gardiner's Cobbossee Stream there were not such opportunities for water power development as Gardiner Village possessed in just the brief gorge below the dam at New Mills.

West Gardiner's terrain was gently rolling. The land, though heavily clayed, was rich with the decaying of centuries-old forests. It was good land for growing things.

Year by year the old town increased its manufacturies and its commerce, while the new cleared its fields and planted crops. Year by year the interests of the two diverged until, by mutual consent, it was adjudged better that they part.

SEPARATION

The legislative act which accomplished the separation and set up the Town of West Gardiner was signed by Governor John Hubbard, August 8, 1850. Gardiner had become a city in 1849.

The new town comprised about 10,400 acres, taken from Ward Three of the City of Gardiner. The boundaries were the same as they are today except that the Neck has been added and a farm or two swapped back and forth with the Town of Farmingdale, from time to time.

West Gardiner had approximately 270 taxpayers the day it became a town. In the hundred years this number has decreased about twelve percent. The valuation has not quite doubled, but the assessments are about 12½ times greater than they were one hundred years ago. And so are profits and wages, and everything we buy or sell.

The town valuation for 1851 was $255,386, for 1950, $465,975. The respective assessments were $2561 and $32,397. The tax rate for 1851 was 9 mills. For 1950 it was 68 mills.

TAX LIST OF WEST GARDINER, 1851

Value of Real Estate	$219,632.00
Value of Personal Estate	35,754.00
Tax	9 mills per cent
238 polls at	1.00
Assessment	2561.00

Names	Total	Names	Total
Samuel Austin	$10.41	David Bangs	4.77
Baker Andrews	7.38	John H. Cram	.63
Smith H. Andrews	3.87	William Crosby	2.16
Wm. H. Allen	6.48	Isaiah Clough (Litch.)	2.97
Jas. Atkins, (Hallowell)	.90	Charles Clough	6.21
Aaron Bran	7.76	Peter Clark Jr.	13.39
Thomas Bran	.95	Wm. W. Clark	8.16
Uriah Briery, (Gardiner)	1.68	Wm. M. Clark, (Hall.)	1.08
Ira Bacheldor	1.67	Joseph Carleton	11.93
John Bean	20.95	Nathaniel Currier	20.09
John Bachelder	19.08	John Crommet	4.09
Samuel Bush	4.02	George Church	10.16
Greenlief Bibber	2.20	James Collins (Gar.)	.90
Brown Baker	11.49	George Collins	5.76
Wm. Blanchard	5.47	Thomas M. Clark	20.59
Geo. W. Blanchard	.72	James Collins	13.36
John Blanchard	10.89	Jonathan Cole	3.41
John Blaisdell	11.53	Joseph Cole	12.29
Handy Blaisdell	.24	Asa Copp	.45
William Bran 2d	3.33	Samuel Clay (estate)	13.14
Gardiner Bran	2.25	William Clay (Gar.)	1.76
Moses Bran	6.35	Daniel Cole	9.15
Levi T. Bran	3.29	James Davis	10.08
Jefferson Bran	7.97	Paul Dyer	13.97
Richard Blaisdell	5.40	Manuel Defratus	3.60
George Bran	.72	Thomas Davis	3.06
James Bran	10.85	William M. Douglass	4.55
Cyrus Bran	4.57	Joshua M. Douglass	6.79
Simon & Francis Bran	3.87	Eleazar Douglass	9.26
Thomas J. Bailey	7.63	Zebulon W. Douglass	8.67
Joseph Baker	3.64	William H. Douglass	6.36
Ivory Bran (Gar.)	2.53	Oliver S. Edwards	13.03
John Baker Jr.	1.00	Ezekiel Edwards	.63
Heli Bassett	10.77	A. K. P. Edwards	6.91
Daniel Bran	6.25	Nathaniel Erskine	2.34
Wm. Bran (estate)	4.23	Jeremiah Erskine	6.36
Aaron Bran 2d	3.02	Daniel Fuller	25.53
John Blanchard Jr.	6.30	David Fuller	13.73
Andrew Brown	5.90	William Fuller	7.30
Joseph A. Brown	5.11	David H. Fuller	12.92
Thomas Burnham	12.92	Henry Farr	6.12
John Burnham	1.13	Isaac Farr	14.63

Names	Total
Enoch French	18.88
John Fogg	11.98
Charles G. French	9.59
John A. French	.59
Joseph Fuller	9.90
Daniel Gilman	8.78
James Gilman	.23
Nahum Grover	4.49
Wm. Grover	3.97
Caleb Goodwin (est.)	9.77
John M. Gove	11.79
John Gowell	19.31
Bernard Goodrich	3.60
Charles Gowell	8.55
Sumner Green	.32
Oliver Goodwin	5.62
R. H. Gardiner (Gar.)	24.75
Archibald Horn (Hall.)	7.20
Samuel Horn	3.92
John W. Herrick	9.29
Wm. P. Haskell	.36
Joseph Haskell (estate)	11.57
Ephraim Hodges 2d	3.64
Ezra Hodges	4.52
Sullivan Hodgdon (est.)	8.49
Samuel Hodgdon Jr.	10.23
Jeremiah Hodgdon	15.89
John Hodgdon	12.35
Samuel Hodgdon	1.80
R. G. Hildreth (Mass.)	9.63
Shepard L. Hutchinson	.32
Daniel Hildreth 2d	10.39
Henry Hinton	8.73
Caroline Hildreth	6.30
Charles H. Houghton	5.47
Merrill Hunt	14.88
Euclid Houghton	9.47
Aaron Haskell	40.30
Nahum Hildreth (Gar.)	.72
Levi Jones	7.07
John Johnson	5.78
Rufus Judkins	13.82
David Jenkins	8.14
John Jaqueth, (Gar.)	2.68
Robert Johnson	8.03
Benj. Jewett	7.58
Seth Kempton	8.19
Nathaniel Kenniston, (Gar.)	4.54
John Knox	1.41

Names	Total
Nathan J. Knox	9.90
John S. Knox	6.80
Thomas K. Lord	3.44
Samuel Lane	15.04
Hiram Lord	10.53
Isaac Lord	8.78
J. B. Littlefield	13.06
Tobias Littlefield	6.46
James Littlefield	12.04
James Lowell, (Gar.)	2.70
Joseph W. Lunt	8.48
James Littlefield, Jr.	4.11
Jeremiah C. Looke	2.32
Jesse Lambert, (Gar.)	12.79
John Libby	10.88
Levi Lambert	8.01
Robert Laplane	7.61
Geo. T. Marston	15.61
Daniel Marston, (est.)	17.38
Samuel C. McKenny	8.69
Thos. C. McCausland	2.70
Jeremiah McCausland	11.03
Thomas H. McCausland	4.05
Sally McCausland	(exempt)
Arthur B. McCausland	8.93
Frederic Mills	6.97
Thomas Mills	2.25
Benj. Marston, (Gar.)	1.08
Arthur B. McCausland, (Gar.)	.90
Andrew McCausland	1.80
Charles W. McCausland	1.80
Joseph S. McCausland	4.55
John McCausland	15.57
John R. McKenney	.36
Nahum Merrill	25.65
Daniel Merrill	18.25
Allison Milliken	17.46
P. L. Milliken	(est. exempt)
Nath'l Marston	4.36
James Marston	3.51
Levi Moore	3.48
Wm. McLellan	2.17
Reuben S. Mitchell	2.25
J. F. Marr	5.55
Alex'r Marr	9.62
F. B. Merrill	6.53
James C. Malcomb	7.97
Stephen Merrill	12.41
Wm. Merrill	9.83

Names	Total
Thomas J. Neal	6.56
Simon Nudd	7.42
Geo. Nash	13.20
Samuel Nash	.54
Hannah Neal	(exempt)
Eliakim Norton	7.28
Robert Newell	25.26
Asa L. Newell	6.54
Edward Norton	12.67
Reuel W. Norris	.59
T. J. Parks (est.)	21.33
Hiram Pope	18.71
Elijah Pope	23.34
John Plaisted (Gar.)	4.28
Simeon Potter	1.49
Sidney Potter	4.65
Bart. B. Potter	.16
Robert B. Potter	2.03
Ansyl Potter	13.85
Edward Peacock, 2nd	16.59
James Peacock (Gar.)	5.53
James Potter	9.93
Sam'l H. Parsons	10.77
Wm. Peacock	7.38
Benj. B. Robinson	6.73
Joseph Roberts	8.42
Charles M. Roberts	15.10
John M. Roberts	11.58
Andrew Rollins	4.95
Gardiner Roberts	12.50
John Robbins	8.44
Chester Rhodes	25.88
Thomas Richardson	3.19
Thomas B. Sampson	36.00
Job Sampson	5.36
John Stevens, 2d	7.38
Maria Sampson	(exempt)
Moses Stevens (Bath)	4.50
Jeptha Sherburn	5.59
James Sherburn (Hal.)	.27
Joseph Steward	3.60
John Steward	2.07
James Sherburn	12.45
Aaron Stackpole	15.08
Harvey Scribner	12.94
Geo. L. Smith	4.69
James Spear	13.70
Richard Spear	8.63
Joseph L. Spear	1.58
William Spear, 2d	12.59
John Spear	9.06

Names	Total
Israel Spear	2.54
George Spear	1.35
Joseph M. Spear	1.08
Gardiner Spear	20.22
Thaddeus Spear	24.02
Charles Small	8.51
Jacob Small	5.31
Hartwell Stickney	6.91
Lois Spear	(exempt)
Herman Stinson	7.23
Hugh Smith	10.05
Barzillai Smith	8.38
John Stevens	5.45
John A. Stevens	2.03
Hannah Tappan	(exempt)
Andrew Tibbetts (Gar.)	1.26
Jesse Tucker (est.)	28.33
Jesse Tucker	1.80
Emerson Titcomb	21.20
Caleb Towle	14.47
Nicholas Towle	7.90
Henry Taylor (Hal.)	1.35
Robert C. Towle	13.55
Moses D. Thompson	3.05
Caleb Taylor	2.84
Wm. Trafton	10.09
Asa Trask	2.25
Elias Taylor	6.59
Geo. D. Wakefield	13.86
James Woodbury	7.56
Wm. Woodbury	11.25
N. M. Whitmore (Gar.)	12.71
John Williams	12.01
Ivory Wakefield	25.73
Jeremiah Wakefield	32.07
Dominicus Wakefield, Jr.	17.96
H. M. and J. Wakefield	7.61
Annanias Wakefield	1.35
Wm. Wakefield (Gar.)	6.08
Granville Wakefield	12.93
Alfred Wakefield	10.98
George Wakefield	1.31
H. D. Wakefield (Gar.)	5.07
A. and F. Wakefield	10.03
James Williams	9.28
Wm. H. Williams	5.97
Nicholas S. Williams	8.39
Ezekiel Ware	12.55
Joseph Wharf, Jr.	12.02
Samuel Washburn	8.80

Single Polls

James Bran, Jr.
Eli Bassett
Moses R. Burnham
Joel L. Burnham
James Cole
Augustine Fuller
George A. Fuller
Daniel F. Fuller
George W. French
Alleoh Galusha
Israel Glass
Wm. Hildreth
Thaddeus H. Littlefield
Robert Littlefield
Alvin Merrill
Seward Merrill
Samuel Merrill
Abner Milliken
Henry Marston
Robert D. Rhodes
Charles Small, Jr.
Wm. Stackpole
Samuel Small
John Smith
David Tucker
Nathan Thorn
Sleeper Towle
John Towle
Thomas Trafton
Franklin Wakefield
P. M. Ware

There was considerable of a flurry, the first few weeks of West Gardiner's townhood. There was a town government to elect, money to be raised, and a hundred and one things to do that no one who had never been in on the organization of a town would ever dream of.

The first town meeting was held in the "Freewill Baptist White Meeting House" which was then on High Street, nearly opposite the site of today's West Gardiner Garage. The date was August 21, 1850.

A venerable, leather-bound tome contains the record of what the townsfolk did there that day. It is written in a finer script than we usually see today and the ink has browned with age:

First, "by major vote and by ballot" they "chose Daniel Fuller, Moderator, who being present, was duly sworn;

"Choose Oliver S. Edwards, Town Clerk;

"Chose Aaron Haskell, Abner Milliken, Dan'l. Marston Selectmen of the Town;

"Chose Merrill Hunt Town Treasurer;

"Chose John Knox and John McKiney Constables;

"Chose Hermon Stinson, Hosea Rice, Geo. W. Blanchard Superintending School Committee;

"Voted to authorize the Treasurer to borrow money to defray the expenses of the town the present year;

"Voted to choose one fence viewer for each School District in town the following persons were chosen viz—John Gowell, Hugh Smith, Sam'l. Merrill, Franklin Wakefield, Edward Peacock, Ezekial Ware;

"Voted that the Selectmen be a committee to assist the Commissioners in settling the public property at the village;

"Voted that the Selectmen be highway surveyors the present year.

"Voted that the present school agents serve through the year or till others are chosen: Ivory Wakefield, Peter Clark, Jr., David Fuller, John Spear, James Potter, George Church, John Stevens, Aaron Bran, 2nd, Jefferson Bran.

"Voted to adjourn sine die,

O. S. Edwards, Town Clerk."

And then the citizens went their proud ways homeward, having launched their new town with dignity and aplomb.

There were town meetings every whipstitch that first year, for there was so much to do: books of record to be set up; adjustments to be made with the City of Gardiner over taxes, property and appropriations which had been made when the two were one. A matter of some $700 which was due from the city for building the Buffee Landing Bridge wasn't straightened out for months.

A record book bearing the inscription "Presented to the Town of West Gardiner by Aaron Haskell, Esq. A.D. - 1850" entitled "Roads and Lines of Division and Stray Beasts" gives some details of life in those days.

An early record in this book is this: "Came into the enclosure of the subscriber on Sunday the 20th of October inst one red horse gray maine, dark tail, the owner is requested to take said horse away and pay charges immediately. West Gardiner, Oct. 28th, 1850, Wm. Grover."

Mr. Grover, evidently, had been appointed to one of the busiest offices of that day—pound keeper. West Gardiner did not have an official pound, ever. Items in the records of town meetings read "Voted that his (the pound keeper's) barn yard, barn or stable be the town pound."

Sheep were so numerous and so prone to stray that branding was practiced to a considerable extent. One item in the book on "roads and lines of division and stray beasts" reads:

"Uriah Briery's Sheep Mark—two holes in each ear, & tail cropt. A true copy attest O. S. Edwards Town Clerk, West Gardiner, Sep. 13, 1855."

Sheep were important possessions of families that grew their own wool to make their own yarn to knit their own socks. Some spun and wove wool into cloth, too, and the clothes for the whole family were made on these farms.

Fence viewers were busy officials in early times, for new fields were being cleared and planted and when one man's field abutted upon another's it was a good thing to have recorded just which should build this or that section of the fence and keep it in repair. It saved a lot of arguing.

Other town officers who found plenty to keep them busy then were the surveyors of wood and bark, of whom there were five or six chosen to settle disputes over measurements of cordwood and hemlock bark, which was sold by the hundreds of cords to the local tanneries; surveyors of lumber, of whom there were four, as compared with one today, and twenty-four highway surveyors, one for each road district in the town.

Those were the days when a man could work out his taxes on the road, at the rate of 12½ cents per hour in the summer, ten cents in winter, if he so desired. If he worked more than enough hours to cover his tax he was like to not get paid for it, unless the town voted to pay cash for the overtime.

The highway surveyors acted as straw bosses in their various road districts and received the same pay as the men they worked beside. The labor of a yoke of oxen on the road was paid for at the rate of ten cents per hour in 1852. The highway surveyors were instructed to pay "boys and steers what they think proper." There is no reference to the rate of pay for horses up to this date. There weren't many horses then, anyway.

WEST GARDINER TOWN HOUSE

It took a couple of town meetings to thrash out all of the details for the building of the town house in 1857 and the records indicate that there was considerable controversy over the location and size. March 18 the sum of $800 was appropriated for this purpose and before the year was out the building was up.

J. N. Fairbanks was paid $25 for the lot for the town house, which is one of the buildings in town which has remained solidly upon its original foundation.

J. Bachelder put in a bill for $757 for building the town house and Samuel Austin charged $7.86 for painting it. Incidentals totalled $37.13 which brought the cost to $26.99 more than the appropriation.

But the town had a brand new meeting place all of its own, and it was mighty proud of it.

For the first few years the town retailed liquor through a duly appointed agent and received a goodly profit therefrom, much as the state does today. But in those days the product of fermentation was not a beverage. It was strictly limited to "medicinal and mechanical" uses. The law said so.

The good mesdames of West Gardiner have traditionally warred upon all pain-killers not labelled as patent medicines and their patient menfolk were wont, at times, to adjourn to the cellar, there to meditate upon the miracles old mother nature can work with a keg of cider.

Even today the bibbers of malt beverages have to scurry around like everything after voters when the biennial ballots are cast to determine whether a man must cross the town line to buy a bottle of beer. One elec-

tion they bought their privilege dear, by the narrow margin of just one vote.

Aye, the old town books are full of facts and figures and stories which would take another hundred years to winnow. And a hundred works like this to set them down.

The old books are there for all who want to read. Meanwhile another hundred years is in the making. And certain living records will not be here when another Centennial rolls around.

THE LIVING RECORDS

Mrs. Florence Farr, widow, at ninety-and-one the oldest living native in the town, recalls how Christmas came to West Gardiner homes many years ago. Sometimes there was a fir tree, with popped corn strung for trimming. More often there was not even popped corn. Children hung their stockings before the fireplace "if," Mrs. Farr explained, "they had one that was whole."

For little girls, the gift, if any there was, was like to be a doll that mother had made of rags carefully saved and washed and folded and sewed just so. Sometimes, if mother was especially clever, and mothers were, in those days, there was colored yarn for hair. The mouth and eyes and nose were marked in ink, if there was any in the house. But charcoal could, and usually did, do just as well.

If there was an orange in the stocking, too, why that was a very great luxury, indeed it was.

For boys the gift was apt to be a cart that father had whittled out before the kitchen fire, when all but he had gone to bed. Ocher and oil made a most Christmasy sort of paint—just the thing for a little red wagon. It matched the barn, too.

Mrs. Farr is one of eleven children of Joseph L. and Rebecca (Plummer) Spear, two of whom are living. Her husband was Elijah Farr, son of Noah, who settled at Cram's Mills in 1809 and then moved farther out upon the Neck and had a place called Farr's Cove named for him, and the Farrs were farmers and clearers of land upon the Neck.

Mrs. Farr, who remembers when families of a dozen children were the common thing, has had neither chick nor child, herself. Her health is good, her mind is keen, but she isn't quite so spry as when she used to hang her woolen stocking by the fire Christmas Eve, when she had one that was whole. She wishes she could get someone to stay with her and keep house in the old homestead that holds so many memories, down by the cove that's beyond the Quaker Meeting House, and then she wouldn't have to "sort of board around" in other people's homes, in the twilight years.

Richard Harry Spear lives not far away as crows reckon distance, on the Benson Road upon a farm that was not new even when he was born, which was eighty-four years ago. His wife, Mrs. Estella (Phillips) Spear, 83, lives

with him on the farm, and so does a daughter, Olive. Another daughter living is Mrs. Esther Ware, wife of Joseph E. Ware, former West Gardiner first selectman.

The house where Harry Spear lives is built upon land which Jeremiah McCausland bought from R. H. Gardiner. Folks liked to get things under cover when these buildings were built. The shed is 92 feet long, from house to barn, with timbers that were roughed out with an adze and pine boards that measure 23 inches wide. There is an old blacksmithed iron ring to tie horses to and once a Hallowell physician, one Dr. Nutting remarked, as he hitched his mare, "if the horse runs away, she'll leave her head."

Many years ago West Gardiner folk depended upon work outside the town for their living, or a part of it—even as they do today. Mr. Spear worked on the Gardiner-Boston steamboat run fifty-and-four years ago. The rate of pay was $1.00 and 1 shilling per day, $35 per month and board.

Several of West Gardiner's elders remember when small sums were reckoned in shillings and pence, although the actual coins were not used. Nine pence was equivalent to 12½ cents, and confused people until almost 1900, when the custom seems to have been dropped.

Mrs. Mary (Hopkins) Goodwin, 81, widow of Adelbert S. Goodwin, lives with her daughter, Mrs. Freda Nason, wife of Louis Nason, former sawmill operator and road commissioner, on the Collins' Mills Road. Harold C. Goodwin, her son, is first selectman of West Gardiner.

A gruesome era in medical history is recalled by a story told by Mrs. Goodwin—when body-snatchers robbed new-made graves to furnish corpses for the study of medical students.

Pamelia, daughter of Mr. Goodwin's grandfather, Joseph H. Towns, died in 1852 at the age of eighteen. The attending physician desired to perform an autopsy for the purpose of studying the effects of the illness which caused her death. Mr. Towns refused permission.

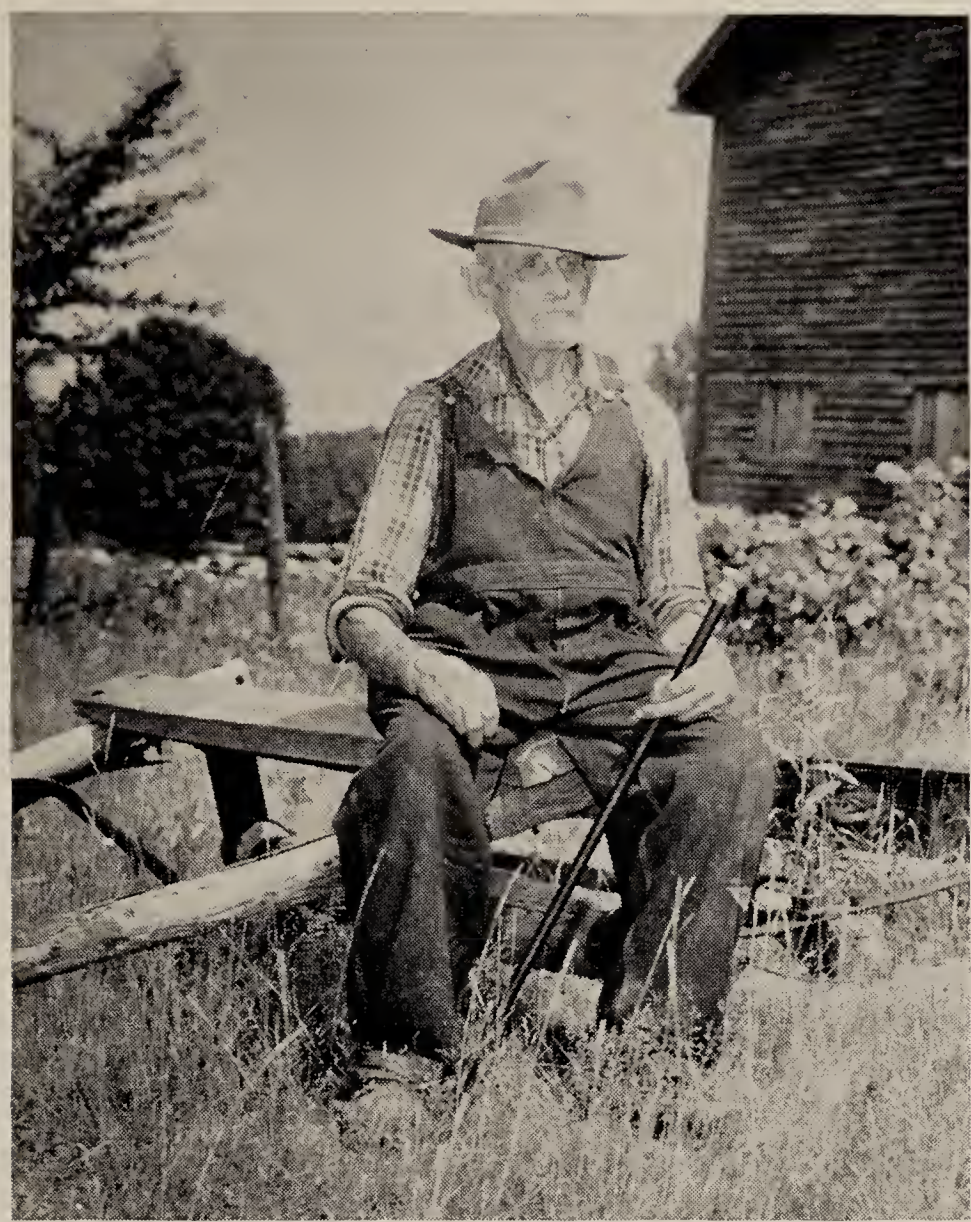
Autopsy studies, now quite common, at that time were considered by many to be a violation of the dead.

Evidently Mr. Towns had heard of the grisly business of grave-robbing which was practised in England and America by organized gangs of body-thieves and he refused to have his daughter buried in the local cemetery. Instead he caused a grave to be dug upon the lawn in front of his house and the bereaved father and mother watched the grave, day and night, to protect the body of their first born.

The unmarked grave is still there, in front of the house now occupied by Herbert Deans.

Mrs. Goodwin is another who believes the granite for Christ's Church was quarried on the Neck. She described the quarry on the old Pinkham place on the banks of the stream as being about three or four acres in extent with a depth of cut of thirty or forty feet.

People worked hard in the old days, Mrs. Goodwin said. "It was common talk in the neighborhood that Elijah Farr and his brother used to hand-mow from two to four acres of hay, before breakfast."



WILL WENTWORTH

William H. Wentworth, 88, official holder of the gold-headed cane with which the Boston Post honors the eldest living men of New England towns, is the dean of West Gardiner blacksmiths. He learned his trade in Winthrop and came to this town as a young man. Now he lives alone on the Neck Road. His wife, deceased, was Lettie Philbrick. They had no children.

Mr. Wentworth remembers when West Gardiner had three or four blacksmith shops running at one time, and doing a land-office business. He ran a shop on the Indiana road and latterly operated the shop at French's Corner, in a building owned by Frank E. Towle. This old building still stands at the corner. It is said to be 150 years old and has been used as a blacksmith shop for most of that time until about two years ago, when it was closed.

"They don't shoe horses now, like they used to," the elderly smithy said. And very probably he is right, for very little today is done "like they used to."

Mr. Wentworth saw the decline of oxen as draft animals and their replacement by horses, and then by trucks and tractors. "It took sixteen shoes to shoe a yoke of oxen, because of their split hooves. Oxen were better than horses, for their day. Everything moved slower, then. There weren't

the mowing machines and the improved roads to take advantage of the faster pace of horses.

"And besides, when an ox was all done hauling they could sell him for beef—and that's more than you can say for a horse." (It has been done, Mr. Wentworth.)

Mr. Wentworth said that mules were more common in these parts than most folks realize, today. They were the equal of horses, or better, for almost any work, some thought. But somehow folks just didn't seem to cotton on to them. A teamster who hauled at Collins' Mill had a team comprised of one horse and one mule. When someone wanted to photograph his wagon with its load of tables from the furniture factory he turned the team around so the mule wouldn't show in the picture.

The blacksmith shop of the old days doubled as a sort of neighborhood club. Farmers, bringing their horses to be shod, sometimes brought their lunches and visited all day with other farmers, as they waited their turn.

Horses were easier to shoe than oxen, Mr. Wentworth recalled, because the cattle were "more uneasy." Usually it was necessary to raise an ox off the floor, with a sling, and tie his foot to a post, to fit and attach the shoes.

For the most part, horses didn't seem to mind being shod. But once in awhile a "kicker" would come in to the shop. Then there was some fun, with everyone pitching in to help or offer advice. Mr. Wentworth "never saw the hoss he couldn't handle," though. Sometimes recalcitrant horses would be slung off the floor, like oxen. Sometimes they would be roped and thrown to the floor, and their hooves tied to posts.

Arthur Durgin, 53, is a blacksmith of the modern era—when the shop is brought to the horse instead of the horse going to the blacksmith. For seventeen years Mr. Durgin has been operating a blacksmith shop on wheels. He covers a circle about fifty miles wide, with West Gardiner as the hub. He has a shop rigged up on his place on the Manchester Road, too. His wife is the former Gladys Rogers, of South Gardiner. They have eleven living children.

Mr. Durgin learned the blacksmith trade from his father, Clarence, who was a carriage maker and a blacksmith at Cedar Grove, back in the days of the big ice industry. "A man had to know something more than just how to drive a nail to be a blacksmith in those days," Mr. Durgin said. "I apprenticed for three years before father would let me go on my own."

School was a pretty dull affair compared with blacksmithing and so young Arthur, a good blacksmith, ran away from home when he was sixteen and went to Norridgewock and got a job on a farm. There were four horses there and he liked it. The pay was $30 per month and found—which was good pay for a full-grown man, in those days.

"But I left that place. I hired out with the farmer and when his wife tried to boss me around, too, why I figured two bosses was one too many."

Mr. Durgin came to West Gardiner about 28 years ago and began to practise his trade in the old building owned by the late Frank E. Towle—the same that Will Wentworth had operated.

But after World War One horses were very rapidly replaced by trucks and tractors and soon there weren't enough animals right around here to

keep a blacksmith busy. It was then that Mr. Durgin bought a ton and one-half truck, rigged a body containing a forge, anvil and vise on it, and began taking the blacksmith shop to the horse.

Now, he seldom has to take the truck out. "I only go out on call, now," he explained. "I know just what size of shoe all of my customers take, and when they want a team shod they just call me and I fit the shoes in the shop at home and jump in the car and drive over and put them on."

Standardization of shoe sizes and types has helped to make this method of operation possible. It is one of the things Will Wentworth complained of as being "not like it used to be."

"Sure, times have changed," Mr. Durgin agreed, "but there's still only one way to shoe a hoss, and that's so his foot'll be level and go right. I've saved many a hoss from the slaughter house that went lame because somebody that didn't know what they were doin' thought it was all right to just nail a shoe on any old way."

Asked whether he thought horses were on the way to extinction, he shook his head emphatically. "Hosses were good for the land, and they always will be. You can't use a tractor in the mud. And hosses are better for some types of woods operations than tractors will ever be. A lot of my customers are woods hosses.

"There seem to be more ridin' hosses than there used to be. The kids see so many automobiles now that hosses are a novelty. In my day it was the other way around. It seems like a lot of folks are buying saddle hosses for their kids, these days."

Prices for shoeing horses have risen just as have prices for shoeing children. Thirty-five years ago the price was from fifty cents to one dollar a foot, according to the size of the shoe that went on the foot. That would be eight dollars to shoe a big-footed team. Today's price averages two dollars per foot, or sixteen dollars for a team.

One of Mr. Durgin's customers is Carroll Lanpher, son of Levi Lanpher, who was a resident of West Gardiner for many years. Carroll Lanpher now farms in South China.

Ervin Horne, 72, carpenter, lives on the Collins' Mills Road. He is Measurer of Wood and Bark for West Gardiner and a member of the family so prominently associated with the tanning industry here, in early days. His wife, deceased, was Lottie Small.

In addition to information included in the section devoted to Collins' Mill industries Mr. Horne furnished some observations on West Gardiner wildlife.

Mr. Horne bears out the general complaint that over-fishing has all but ruined the fishing in Cobbossee Stream. And he deplores the over-trapping and poaching of muskrats. Last year he caught ten rats, trapping part time, as a sideline. Twenty-five years ago he averaged about fifty, on the same basis. He has known of trappers in the region of Collins' Mills to get as high as 200 muskrats in a season.

Deer first came to this area in any quantity about fifty years ago, he said. Moose once were so numerous on the Kennebec there was a regular industry in moosehide. Wholesale slaughtering almost extinguished the

specie and resulted in Maine's first game conservation law. The first Maine game wardens were "moose wardens." The first moose seen in West Gardiner when they began to reappear here a few years ago were mistaken for mules, Mr. Horne said.

Bobcats are increasing in West Gardiner, as the deer herd increases. Bears, which haven't been seen here for many years, are reappearing.

Raising the height of the dam at New Mills in Gardiner flooded meadows so that farmers could no longer cut bog hay or harvest cranberries. Mr. Horne told of an island in the stream above the Oxbow where he had cut hay with his father. When the water level was raised, about 1900, "ice froze to that island lifted it up and turned it completely around, and now there is no more island, just a muddy place in the stream," he said.

Mr. Horne summed up the departure of industry from Collins' Mills: "Years ago there was plenty of work. This was quite a place, once."

Mrs. Alice (Trafton) Ware, 83, widow of Irving L. Ware, lives on the Ware farm on the Spear's Corner Road. Six of her eight children are living,—two in West Gardiner. Three generations of Wares were West Gardiner first selectmen: Ezekial, Irving and Joseph E., who lives with his family on the Ware farm. Another son, Paul C. Ware, lives on the same road. He is a trustee of the West Gardiner School District.

Mrs. Ware's account of the activities of her husband's father, Ezekial, is a story of early West Gardiner days. Ezekial was present at the first town meeting and was elected as a fence viewer.

Ezekial Ware was a successful farmer in addition to being action in town government. He "specialized in diversification" and at one time or another raised pretty nearly every kind of a crop indigenous to this region.

In Ezekial Ware's farming days there was no Horseshoe Pond—just a meadow or bogland where two brooks met and flowed into Cobbossee Stream. Cranberries grew on the bog and Ezekial harvested and sold them. He also cut bog hay and shipped it to Boston, baled, where it was used in packing dishes for shipment.

There was but little nourishment for livestock in bog hay but it was used locally to feed young stock and for bedding. To say that a farmer's critters were "fattened on bog hay" was to say that they were very thin indeed.

However, farmers desired to own bog land because of the cranberries and the rank growth of bog hay which could be had without plowing or seeding. Ezekial bought, sold and dickered in bog land until pretty nearly every farm around Spear's Corner owned a piece of the bog. A horse collar and a broken-down buggy were once dickered for a small slice of bog land.

Bog hay was mowed by hand and raked by hand. Even after such new-fangled contraptions as mowing machines were invented, they couldn't be used on the bog. Oxen could work on the bog but horses required special shoes, on the principle of snowshoes, to prevent their miring. The hay was hauled off the bog on poles. Carts would sink to the hubs.

Both Ezekial and his son Irving, who succeeded him on the farm, raised greenstuff for the Boston market, at times. They shipped it on the boat to Boston, which left Gardiner every evening. Many West Gardiner

products found their way to the Boston market via the old steamboats, including baled hay. Competition for passengers on the steamboats once became so keen that the fare was reduced to twenty-five cents per passenger—Gardiner to Boston.

Oldest known living native of West Gardiner is Mrs. Martha (Ware) Campion, daughter of Ezekial and Jane (Smith) Ware who was born at the Ware Farm in 1852, when West Gardiner was only two years old. She taught school in West Gardiner, Litchfield, Hallowell, Maine and in Massachusetts, and married James E. Campion of Boston in 1903. She now lives with her nephew, Alton Ware, in Dorchester, Mass.

ARCHIE D. COLE

Archie D. Cole, proprietor of Cole's Grocery at Spear's Corner, holds what must be some sort of a record for laboring in the vineyard of town affairs. Over a period of forty-one years he has held seven different town offices and he has been a representative to the Maine Legislature from this town for three consecutive terms.

Mr. Cole is the grandson of Daniel and Hannah (Edwards) Cole who came here from Monmouth more than 100 years ago, bought land from R. H. Gardiner on the Horseshoe Pond Road, and built the house where Vernon Beckwith now lives. His parents were Arthur S. and Margaret (McKinnon) Cole. His wife is the former Mary Peacock and they have three children, Mrs. Margaret (Cole) Runnels, of Gardiner, Melvin C. Cole of this town and Wallace Cole of Massachusetts.

Mr. Cole bought a grocery store situated on the north side of the Gardiner Road, near the corner, from Henry Powers about 1909 and ran it for

fifteen years. The grocery store he now owns was built by Levi Lanpher about 1926, operated by Jack Trethewey and later by his widow for about eleven years, and has been run by Mr. Cole for the past fifteen years.

He was born at the Cole homestead in 1882.

Sometimes Mr. Cole has held more than one town office at a time. He became Town Clerk in 1909 and held the office through 1925. He was a member of the School Committee in 1914-15 and chairman in 1916. In 1918 he became a selectman and he was Chairman of the Board of Selectmen for the years 1919-20-21. He was Town Auditor in 1928 and from 1931 to 1936 inclusive. He was Moderator in 1928-29-30, was chosen again in 1933, and has held that office for the past seventeen consecutive years, and holds it now. He has been Tax Collector for the past eight years, and is now. During the years 1938-39-40-41 he was Election and Ballot Clerk, and for one year, 1943, he was Dog Officer and Constable. He was Chairman of the Republican Town Committee from 1946 through 1949.

The class town of West Gardiner is entitled to send a representative to the legislature once every ten years. Mr. Cole has been elected to this office for the past three consecutive class terms, 1925-35-45.

No one, including Mr. Cole himself, can reckon how many extraneous boards, committees, sub committees and the like he has served as member or chairman.

Irwin L. McCaslin lives in one of the old houses of West Gardiner, built by his grandfather, Henry Hinton, who came from England in the early 1800's to Halifax, N. S., worked in Aroostook County for a time and then walked to West Gardiner, so it is said.

The old Hinton house is situated on the south side of the Horseshoe Pond Road on what is known as Hinton Hill, about one mile beyond Spear's Corner, toward Gardiner. An elm stands across the road which Henry Hinton planted 125 years ago.

Mr. McCaslin's mother, Mrs. Carrie (Hinton) McCaslin, was born in the old house in 1861 and died last year at the age of 88. She taught school in Litchfield before marrying his father, Harvey McCaslin. Henry Hinton, her father, was 92 when he died, about 1908. Mr. McCaslin lives alone in the old house where he was born in 1893. He runs the old farm.

Herbert Goldsmith, 75, lives a little further along the road toward Gardiner in an old, white farmhouse on the banks of Cold Stream. His unusual memory for facts and figures has contributed much to the material in this magnum opus. He was born in the old white farmhouse which belonged to his father and mother, Hubbard, Jr. and Elizabeth (Hildreth) Goldsmith. His daughter, Grace, a teacher in Gardiner High School, lives with him. Another daughter, Mrs. Frances Matthews, lives in Gardiner. His late wife was the former Cynthia Sears.

The farm was purchased by Mr. Goldsmith's father from Eleazer Douglass in 1869. His grandfather, Hubbard Goldsmith, lived where George Moreshed lives now, and was one of the prominent farmers of the older days.

While just about everything in the shape of a vegetable has been raised in West Gardiner at one time or another the principal crop, in the prosperous days of farming here, was hay. And for hay there was a good

market when the street cars of Boston were powered by horses and when the breweries advertised their prosperity by the size and number of well-fed percherons that hauled their red-wheeled wagons. In those days horse-power moved on four legs and its fuel was hay.

Mr. Goldsmith's grandfather Hubbard whom the children called "big papa" to distinguish him from his son, Hubbard, Jr., whom they called just "papa," raised and marketed hay in just about all of its forms. At times he hauled his hay to Richmond, starting out while the stars still shone in the morning and returning when they were out again at night, the richer by one dollar the ton.

A more satisfactory market, though, was Gardiner.

Commercial Street was known as Back Street, then, and it was apt to be lined with wagons from West Gardiner farms, laden with hay or stove-wood. Purchasers made their dickers with the farmers, paid them on the spot, and the farmers delivered the hay or wood to the buyer's home. Even though the farmer had to haul his load home again, sometimes, he'd had a chance to cuss and discuss the weather and to exchange opinions with other farmers as to whether bringing the silver dollar back would quiet the financial panic of 1873 and maybe ease up on the number of West Gardiner farms that were being foreclosed on and sold for taxes.

In the winter, to vary the diet and monotony of winter chores, the West Gardiner farmers of "big papa" Hubbard Goldsmith's day would sometimes hitch up the sled and drive down to the Kennebec and buy a load of tomcod for two or three dollars. When the family had eaten its fill the hens could have the rest. They kept well all winter, frozen, in the shed. There was always a salt cod tacked up on the cellar door, and it almost covered the door. A boy who was hungry could whittle off a chunk with his jackknife and sustain life until mealtime.

Folks in those days raised most of their food on the farm but when they did buy something, it wasn't any nickels-worth that could be lugged home in a paper bag. Two barrels of flour didn't have time to spoil before a big, hungry family could make it disappear in the form of homemade bread and biscuits. A whole round cheese was usually in the cool cellar and when it was gone, why there was nothing for it but to get another one, and a barrel of crackers to go with it. They bought molasses by the barrel and tea by the chest. If a man was seen coming out of a store with a bag of flour under his arm it was all over town in no time at all that he was on his uppers and no doubt would be calling on the town, soon.

Even candy was bought in five-pound lots. Chocolate creams and French mixture were favorites and Canada peppermints helped ease the cough that sometimes came with the hay pressing.

"Papa" Hubbard Goldsmith and a neighbor, Joseph Trafton, operated a haypress together, once. It may have been an adaptation of the invention of a Pittston man, Moses B. Bliss, who invented a portable haypress in 1827 and thus helped the Kennebec farmers to reach out for larger markets. Anyway, the rig used in the Goldsmith-Trafton enterprise involved a big wheel and a drum and the horses pulled "straight out." The output was just about six tons of hay baled per day.

While they were resting, the men cut small gray birches, split them, notched the ends, and used them to bind the bales of hay. A narrow board inserted under the hoops helped to stiffen the bale and was a handy place upon which to mark the weight, and maybe the name of the consignee, if the bales were to be shipped.

Sometimes a farmer would take a flyer in raising peas to sell. It was something scandalous, though, the way hiring help ate up the profits. Pickers expected to get as high as twenty cents per bushel, just for picking peas. A hired man demanded $10 per month, and board on top of that. And a good room to sleep in, too—as good as any the family had. An extra good hand would hire out for a year at $150 and board, but the family had better set a pretty good table or else they'd lose him. Top hands could always get a job —then as now—good times or bad.

You could hire a man to cut and pile hardwood at fifty cents per cord, then. And after you fitted it for the stove, and dried it, you could sell it to the School District or haul it to Gardiner and get $4.00 for it.

A first class carpenter made big money—a dollar and a quarter a day and his dinner. That was the going wage when so many of West Gardiner's homes were built, around 1870.

There was a shoemaker named Frank Bran at Spear's Corner who made knee-high cowhide boots, wooden-pegged, that wouldn't wet through all day. This shoemaker also made dress boots, called "thin boots," and sometimes he'd take his pay in eggs.

And so, with turning a hand to this and that, the men of "big papa" Hubbard Goldsmith's day—and "papa's," too—managed to pay for their farms, and raise their big families, and lay a little aside for a rainy day. There were twelve children in the house of this man and he saved enough to loan such of his sons as wanted to farm the money to get started. Every cent was repaid in full, without interest. There were several Goldsmith farms near where Herbert Goldsmith lives now.

By the time Mr. Goldsmith was big enough to work out there were more opportunities. A young fellow could get a job at $1.00 for a ten-hour day at Pope's canning factory over on High Street, for instance. Winters he could work on the Kennebec ice at the unheard of pay of $1.50 a day, and if he owned or could borrow a team of horses he could get another $1.50. That's one of the things that got West Gardiner folks into the habit of working out, they say—the big pay on the ice.

But the most that Herbert Goldsmith ever saw a man make in one day, away back there before the 1900's was $2.50. The man was Albion Small, and he made all that money because he was very quick with his hands and he was willing to work long hours, husking corn at five cents a basket, at Pope's Cannery. This was more money, even, than Mr. Small could make at carpentering, and he was one of the best.

The work that Herbert Goldsmith liked the best of all, though, was farming on the old place or working out some place with his team of horses. And that's what he's done, mostly, during the later years.

Fred P. Trafton, 85, was born in West Gardiner, grew up here, did business here, and has retired to live in Gardiner with his wife, who was Fannie

Glidden. She was prominent in West Gardiner church and temperance work. They have three children living. A son, Lorimer, a former West Gardiner selectman, drowned at Grand Lake in the fall of 1947.

Trafton and Glidden both are old names in the town.

Mr. Trafton has heard his grandfather tell of bears damaging crops and killing sheep when West Gardiner was young.

Thomas Trafton, Fred Trafton's grandfather, came from Georgetown about 1831 and settled across the road from where Claribel Douglas lives now. Fred Trafton's father, Joseph, when a young man was so eager to get hold of a farm of his own that he borrowed money at nine percent interest to buy what was the Elbridge Whitten place, where Walter B. Mayo lives, now. He paid off the mortgage, too, outrageous interest and all.

Mostly he did it by farming, by getting out cordwood, and by engaging in such enterprises as the haypress, described above. In later years, when some of his strength had departed, he made butter and had a butter route, just to have "a little something coming in."

Fred Trafton succeeded to the butter route but it wasn't quite enough to satisfy an ambitious young man and he quickly began to branch out into other things.

He was road commissioner in West Gardiner for three or four years near the turn of the century and he remembers that when the height of the dam at New Mills was raised it flooded the old Ware bog and made Horseshoe Pond. In high water in the spring the pond overflowed what is now the black road to Lewiston and Mr. Trafton was in charge of the work of raising the road about three feet at this point.

Mr. Trafton saw a colorful era come and go in West Gardiner—the days of the electric cars.

The car line began operating from Lewiston to Gardiner, via Spear's Corner, about 1908. Mr. Trafton thinks it was first known as the Lewiston, Auburn & Waterville Railroad. Later it was called the "A & K," which stood for Androscoggin and Kennebec. You could go clear to Boston on the electric cars, once—and maybe to Bangor.

The electric railroad made some important changes in West Gardiner. West Gardinerites living on or near the line could work in Gardiner or Augusta and still get home every night, for one thing. And attendance at Gardiner High School became more convenient and the West Gardiner enrollment at Litchfield Academy began to dwindle.

Horses, as if realizing that these monsters on rails were the beginning of the end for four-legged transportation, were afraid of the electric cars, or pretended to be. The motorman would stop the car when he saw that a horse along the road was frightened. Farmers along the route had to watch their pasture fences more closely, now. No stray cow ever won a dispute with an electric car over the right of way.

Riding to work or to school on the electric car was a lot of fun. Everyone knew everyone else and so did the conductor. More than one courtship began on the old A. & K. And more than one scandal, too. It cost twenty cents to ride to Gardiner, along toward the last of it. School children had special tickets, and rode for half fare.

The old A & K made it possible for an ambitious young fellow like Mr. Trafton to do quite a business for himself in West Gardiner and Litchfield. He went into lumbering in a pretty big way, for these parts, cutting about 250,000 feet a year, in Litchfield, mostly. One year, he cut a million feet. The logs were sawed at Bartlett's Mill in Purgatory and loaded on a siding at True's Store and shipped to Lewiston or Augusta via the A & K. Some of the lumber was cut on the Pinkham Lot on the Neck. Mr. Trafton bought the timber standing and paid day's wages of $1.50 for men to cut and handle it.

The blizzards of 1920 shut the A & K down for three weeks during February and March. The plows simply couldn't keep ahead of the falling snow. Drifts were as high as the trolley wire, and some folks could walk right up and look down their chimneys—if they had snowshoes. There was only one way to get the A & K running again, short of waiting 'til summer, and that was for men along the right of way to pitch in and dig it out with shovels. And that's just what they did. Crews of volunteers came out from Gardiner to help. That's the way folks felt about the old A & K.

The A & K was good for farmers, too. Fred Babcock, who ran a big farm just across the Babcock Bridge in Litchfield started the bulk of his baled hay to the Boston market via the A & K, and so did others.

Mr. Trafton owned three or four farms in West Gardiner at one time and one year he wintered 52 head of cattle. Toward the end of World War I he sold 50 tons of hay to the Hollingsworth and Whitney paper mill in Gardiner at $35.00 per ton. They used it to feed their horses hauling wood.

Another of Mr. Trafton's sidelines was selling commercial fertilizer. The A & K put in a siding in front of his house, which is where David Allen lives now, and some twenty carloads a year were unloaded here and sold to West Gardiner farmers.

World War I presaged great changes in America. Everything speeded up. Women began docking their hair and skirts and smoking cigarettes in public and cutting up in scandalous fashion. The Eighteenth Amendment to the Constitution got on the law books and we had Prohibition. There was a decided moral let-down. The best selling novels were things like "Flaming Youth," "Three Weeks" and similar intimate tales of boudoir adventures.

West Gardiner changed greatly. Many of the men who did not go to war worked at high wages in Gardiner and in the Bath shipyards. They found the security of a weekly pay check more to their liking than the hard work and uncertainty of farming, and this was the time when West Gardiner started to become a suburb—the home of people who worked for wages out of town.

The first year in which an automobile was owned in West Gardiner, according to the tax assessment records, was 1911. Before the end of the war there were more than twenty of the go-devils pestering farmers to pull them out of the clay and mud.

Automobiles changed not only the economic aspect of life in West Gardiner but the social life as well. No longer did fifty or sixty neighbors congregate of an evening to have a "sing." No longer did a man and his wife dress in their Sunday best on sabbath afternoons and start out along the road making their "dooryard calls."

For one thing, it wasn't safe at all with a buggy on the roads, any more. The dust from passing autos would choke you to death, sure. And anyway, there was no one to call on because everyone was out riding in his automobile. Sometimes people ventured as far as Belgrade Lakes and back, of a Sunday afternoon, patching tires all along the way.

And the automobile era ended the A & K.

The broad stream of freight which once had flowed from West Gardiner's fields and woods was dried to a trickle now. The cordwood and the lumber were gone and, anyway, city people were all burning coal. The hayfields lay, neglected and unplowed, growing up to hawkweed, with alders spreading from the brooks. And there was scarcely a field of grain in all the town. It was cheaper to buy it from the west than it was to raise it here, most folks thought.

And so, near the last of July, in 1932, the last of the trolleys made its final, lonesome run over the old right of way, and then the rails were taken up and sold and people dug out the ties and piled them in their yards to dry and burn for summer wood.

And these are some of the things that Mr. Trafton sees when he opens his book of memories of old West Gardiner.

George A. Hamlin, 85, was born on what is known as the Tim Campbell place on High Street, son of C. G. and Angela (Corwell) Hamlin. His wife is the former Nellie J. Douglass of Litchfield and they will celebrate their 64th Wedding Anniversary this coming Thanksgiving Day.

Mr. and Mrs. Hamlin were young folk back in the days when large families helped to build this country. Ten of their fifteen sons and daughters are living. All have remained in Maine except one, who lives in New Jersey.

Four of their children live in West Gardiner: Walter and Phillip Hamlin and Mrs. Nellie Johnson and Mrs. Martha Loubier.

For the past twenty and seven years Mr. and Mrs. Hamlin have lived on the Pond Road.

Mrs. Adrian (Philbrick) Small, 77, widow of Albion Small, lives on the Pond Road with her daughter, Olive, and son-in-law, James E. Dunn. She was born in West Gardiner, one of fifteen children of Francis Tufts Philbrick and Annabelle (McLaughlin) Philbrick.

Mrs. Small's memory supplies many details of what life was like for women and children—and for men, too—back in what you may or may not choose to call the "good old days."

There were no telephones in 1870 when Mrs. Small's mother moved on to the Indiana Road with her husband and helped him clear a farm and raise a family there. And Mrs. Philbrick would not have had much time to visit over it, anyway; for she raised nineteen children (Mr. Philbrick had four by a previous wife).

One point that Mrs. Small brings out is that raising large families in those days was quite a different proposition from what it would be now. Children were an asset to a couple trying to clear a farm. They all worked, girls as well as boys, at something, and the older ones helped take care of the younger. So many sons growing up on the farm permitted Mr. Philbrick to work on the Kennebec ice harvest and to go to Bath at times and work at

his trade as ship carpenter, "to get hold of a little cash money, though sometimes he thought he'd have been better off if he'd stayed at home and worked the farm."

The Philbrick family was very nearly self sustaining right on the land, even before the seventy-five acres were cleared and the crops began to come in. All of the vegetables, of course, were home grown. And so was the grain for flour and for livestock.

Wild berries were an important source of food and income, too. They were canned for winter use by the family. The younger children did the berry picking, mostly—and then they took the surplus to town and sold them, hulled, for sixteen cents a quart—nice, fresh field strawberries that would cost $1.25 today, if you could find them anywhere for sale. The children took their shoes and stockings with them to town. But they carried them until they reached the outskirts of Gardiner.

Everything saved, in those days, counted.

The Philbricks kept five cows and they were milked by the women folk, and they made the butter, too, that was a source of "cash money." Butter sold for fifteen cents per pound. There was a little milk for cooking and table use, but only the youngest child was given milk to drink. Milk fattened hogs and made calves grow. Hens didn't lay, winters, then, like they do now, and there wasn't much of a market for eggs, even if they did. Oh, the storekeepers would take a few eggs in trade if you were a regular customer. But they'd much rather have cash. Anyway, eggs brought only nine cents a dozen.

The womenfolk made the soap for everyday family use, of grease-savings and potash made from wood ashes right on the farm. For washday, though, there was a cake of the old American Family yellow soap from the store. It must have been a very long rope that held the Philbrick's Monday wash!

In the fall the mother and her daughters made three or four ten-quart pails of mincemeat, of neck of beef and trimmings of the hog that had been raised and slaughtered on the place. The Philbrick's planned to keep their hog about a year and a half, so he'd be good and big, and produce enough lard to last a year, besides fresh pork and hams and bacon, home-cured, and salt pork that would last the winter through.

Stockings were of wool and they were knit at home. Farm people, in those days, didn't wear cotton stockings in the summer. Usually, they didn't wear any stockings at all in the summer, the girls and women didn't. Evenings, or when she sat down to rest a minute, if she did, mother or daughter would be expected to knit on woolen stockings. They knit the year 'round, those women did.

Mrs. Small said "we got so sick of the sight of a pair of long, woolen stockings that we were glad to go barefoot in the summer. The boys felt the same way about them. I've seen my brothers heat chips in the oven to stand on, barefoot, when the ground was frozen, and they split the winter's wood in the yard."

Among the social statistics compiled with the census every ten years is an item "value of home manufactures" which tells how much the women of those days contributed to the cash income of the farm. It's a right respect-

able proportion of the total income, when you stop to think of all the cooking, clothes-making and child rearing they did besides.

Mrs. Small's mother added to the family income with a loom upon which she wove rag carpets, to order, when she was resting. She could weave about a square yard in half a day, and got "sixpence" for her work. The patron furnished the warp and the rags.

Mrs. Small bears out Mrs. Farr's story of early Christmases, when a "dinah doll" was just about the only present a little girl could expect to find in her stocking. Sometimes, though, when her father wasn't working on the ice or in Bath he found time to make a doll's cradle out of a saltbox, with runners fashioned from a barrel head.

Not far from Philbrick's, over on the Pond Road, lived the Hildreth family, descendants of Paul Hildreth, said to be the first white settler of Lewiston, progenitor of former Maine Governor Horace A. Hildreth. This progressive family was the first on the Pond Road to have a kerosene lamp and the whole neighborhood flocked to the Hildreth house to see it work, the first night. It was a great improvement over candles, but Mr. Hildreth turned it up so high it smoked.

Life was not all dull work in the old days, though. Mrs. Small remembers well the dances at the Town House, with music by a fiddler. Her father would hitch up a team and take the whole family to the fair that used to be held on High Street, at the Town House.

And there were mighty kind neighbors. One of them, a Miss Augusta Fairbanks, who lived on the Spear's Corner Road, was a nurse—one of the old-time "practical" nurses that would pitch right in and wash the floor, or do anything that needed doing.

When she died in 1928 at the age of 69 the Kennebec Journal had this to say: " 'Aunt Gustie,' as she was lovingly called, helped to marshal into the world our young and present generation, and with thoughtfulness and kindly deeds stood by in the passing of the older ones. She has in truth mothered us all."

Away back in the early 1800's "Aunt Gustie's" parents, Joseph and Lydia Fairbanks built a small house near where the Fairbanks Cemetery is now, but they were blessed with a large family and pretty soon "the old house was all wore out" and so they built a new one, in which Kendall Merrill lives now. When the Fairbankses first came there they could hear the wolves howl down by the frozen meadow, of winter nights, "Aunt Gustie" used to say.

One of Joseph and Lydia's sons, Charles, grew up to be a veterinarian and stayed on the old place with his sister and administered to the needs of sick critters all over the neighborhood, just as "Aunt Gustie" did for humans. He was hale and hearty just before he died in 1939, at 90 years of age, as the result of an automobile accident. He'd always said he'd live to be a hundred.

Mrs. Small doesn't blame the young ones for escaping from the farm and seeking work in the city as soon as they were able—which is just what most of them did. And she is not the only one who suggests that the hard work which children did on farms, usually without much in return, was one of the reasons for the exodus to the city.

One could forgive Mrs. Small if she just sat a while, now. But the working habit is too deeply ingrained. "I wouldn't be happy, just sitting and doing nothing," she declares. And so she braids rugs to sell, "while she's resting."

Wendell C. Small, 42, is the son of the late Albion Small and the above-quoted Mrs. Adria Small. He lives on the farm that was cleared by his grandfather and farms it and three other places on the Indiana Road, as well. His wife is the former Helen Stephenson of Portland. They have no children.

Mr. Small thinks there are still opportunities to farm in West Gardiner. He has earned the right to express his opinion.

Mr. Small now specializes in feeding beef for the Brighton Market. He buys calves and yearlings, stokes them with good hay and grain grown on his 315 acres, and then sells them as quality beef, which they are. He handles about 60 head a year.

Grandfather Philbrick wouldn't believe it if he saw with his own eyes the changes that eighty years have wrought in the way of doing business on his old farm.

There isn't a yoke of oxen nor a team of horses on the place. Everything is done by machinery. And the fields that were run out before Mr. Small took them over have been fertilized and worked over until they produce more than they ever did.

One hired man and Mr. Small do more work on the three farms than Grandfather Philbrick and all his nineteen children did on the one farm, back a few years. Of course, they have extra help for the harvest.

Last year Mr. Small harvested 180 tons of hay, 1,320 bushels of oats, 1,000 bushels of corn on the cob, 500 bushels of barley.

One thing Grandfather Philbrick would recognize, though, and that is that hard work and a "good head" are responsible for the farm's success now, just as they were back there in that other century.

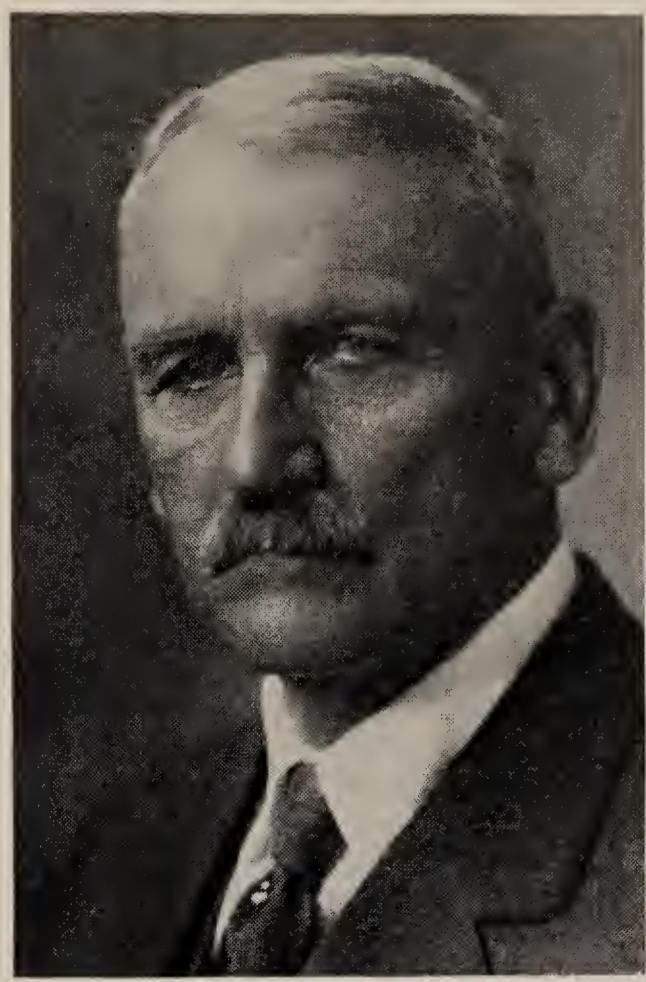
Lloyd Jones, 42, is another man who makes a good living running the farm his grandfather ran before him, and another one to go with it.

Mr. Jones' grandfather, Sewall Jones, bought the 100-acre farm on High Street in 1871. His son, Sewall, Jr., ran the farm until his death. The widow, Mrs. Mary (Howes) Jones, 71, lives on the place, which is now operated by her son, Lloyd, as a dairy farm.

Lloyd Jones bought the Thomas DeFratus farm of sixty acres, nearby, and lives there with his wife, the former Georgie McGinnis, who has three children by a former marriage.

On the two places Mr. Jones keeps 15 cows and he runs a milk route of 75 customers. He raises about fifty tons of hay, which is sufficient to winter his cattle. He buys his grain, hasn't a horse on the place, and hires help only in haying time. He uses a tractor.

"Of course a man can still make a living farming in West Gardiner, if he's willing to get up early in the morning," is Mr. Jones' opinion.



JOHN FRANK STEVENS

John Frank Stevens probably would echo this opinion if he could be interviewed today, for he was a man who believed that almost anything was possible of a West Gardiner son—and he went out into the world and proved it.

And to prove that he proved it there's a bronze figure of Mr. Stevens in the Maine State Library in Augusta which is a copy of a ten-foot bronze statue that gazes out across the Rocky Mountains at Marias Pass, Summit, Montana. This is in token of his having discovered the best way over the Rocky Mountains while he was one of the chief construction engineers of the Great Northern Railroad.

Mr. Stevens was born on the Herbert Mosher farm on the Hallowell Road, now owned by Norris Bowie. The date was April 25, 1853. His parents were John and Harriet (French) Stevens. He died at his home in Southern Pines, North Carolina, June 2, 1940, at the age of 90.

Mr. Stevens attended the old red schoolhouse on the Hallowell Road which preceded the white schoolhouse that bore his name. He was one of the world's famous civil engineers; one of the chief engineers of the Panama Canal, and a builder of railroads all over the world.

In spite of his success Mr. Stevens never forgot West Gardiner.

And West Gardiner never will forget him.

CLARENCE GETCHELL'S TANNERY

INDUSTRY

North, past the Grange Hall at French's Corner, a dusty road wanders by old elms and houses that are resting. It is the road to Collins' Mills of old, and to a vigorous yesterday whose sun, somehow, failed to rise upon the promise of its tomorrow.

You wouldn't know it, now, but once this road was a heavy-trafficked way, when oxen hauled their patient, heavy loads of local manufacture. Many a thousand feet of logs have gone down over that old hill, and cords of hemlock bark, and grain for milling. And up the hill came boards and beds and furniture and flour and bundles of leather that had been tanned in liquor made of Cobbossee's good, soft water.

Steady wages, then, bought food and heat and light for the little homes that workmen built nearby the corner, and profits filled the cellars and the woodsheds of the owners against the winter's cold.

Outsiders came and looked upon this busy place of local industry, and talked of railroads coming here, and great textile manufactories with, perhaps, someday, a new city to rise in the hollow and populate the hill.

Outsiders did buy the dam, at last. But they took its flowage for another city's mills, and that is when the sun went down and the twilight came wherein the oldsters sit today, remembering, as they listen to the stream that turns their wheels no more.

More than one hundred-fifty years ago, control of the Cobbossee's flowage was a bone of contention. And dissatisfied owners of its intervales still chew this over, today.

The ruckus began with one of the first settlers on the Neck, Jacob Cram, Jr., who came from Monmouth when he was twenty and eight years old and cleared a farm on the lake shore and gave to it the name of Cram's Point, which it bears today. And this was in 1793.

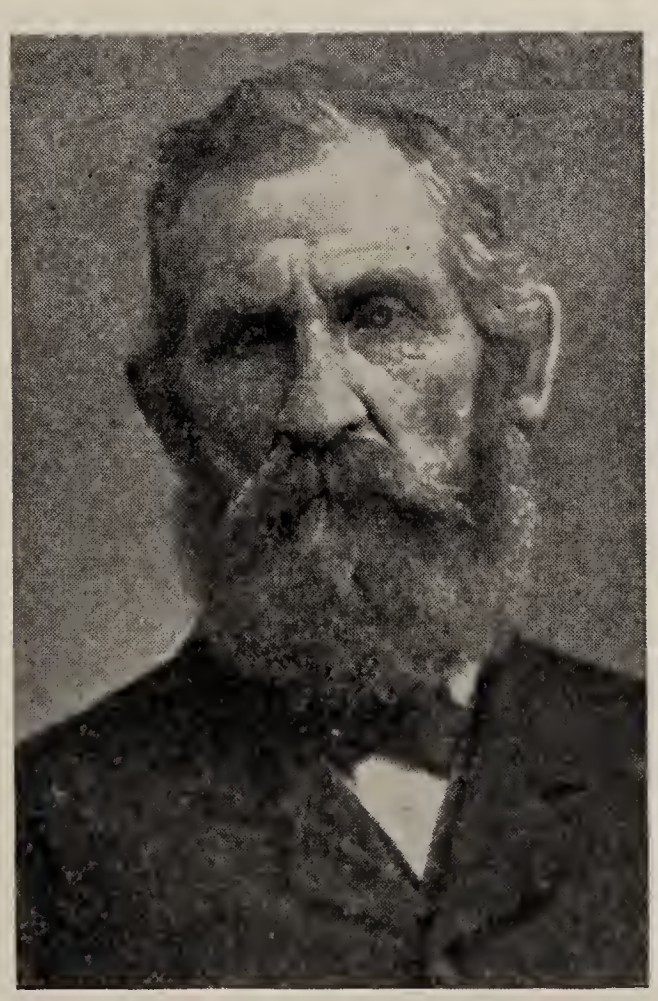
About two years later he built a log dam where Collins' Dam now is and either a grist mill or a sawmill, or both, on the western or then Litchfield side of the stream. R. H. Gardiner owned the land upon the eastern bank of old Cabbassa, and he looked across the stream upon the work of Jacob Cram and found that it was good.

Accounts vary as to just what did happen after that.

One story has it that Gardiner entered into an agreement with Cram, or his son, William, whereby the old log dam was torn down and the present granite one built, about 1830, on a sort of partnership basis. Another story is to the effect that Gardiner forced Cram to tear out the portion of the log dam bearing upon his, Gardiner's, land, thus ruining the value of Cram's holdings.

Whichever way the story starts, the ending is the same. Cram sold "his part of the water right at a low figure to Gardiner—which is just what the latter had intended from the start." (Kingsbury & Deyo).

In 1854, when Gardiner sold the dam and about one hundred acres of land for $6,500 to John Collins, the property included a grist mill, a sawmill and a carding mill that gave employment to four persons making cotton batting.



JOHN COLLINS

Thirty-eight-year-old John Collins was the son of Paul and Mary (Winslow) Collins, Friends, who came to Manchester in 1803 from New Hampshire via Durham, Maine, and were buried in the Quaker Burial Place when they laid their earthly burdens down.

John Collins' grandson, Karl R., a former West Gardiner selectman, now farms on a portion of the old property. John, another grandson, is employed as an engineer by the Central Maine Power Company.

John Collins had been operating his mills about two years when he circulated the following petition, dated January 30, 1856:

> "To the Legislature of Maine:
>
> We, the undersigned, inhabitants of the town of Litchfield, in the County of Kennebec, respectfully request that the lands on which we live may be set off from the said town of Litchfield and annexed to the town of West Gardiner."

The signers, all property owners or residents of the "Homely Strip," as it was then called, were: John Collins, Cyrus Howard, Asa Getchell, Hugh Getchell, William Farr, Andrew Pinkham, Jeremiah Pinkham, Lemuel Pinkham, Noah Pinkham, Israel Pinkham, William Goodwin, Rufus Town, Joseph H. Town, Lot Goddard, Charles F. Goddard, Noah Farr, Frank Wadsworth.

There being no objection on the part of the town of Litchfield, the legislature granted the petition and the Neck became a part of West Gardiner March 22, 1856.

Reason for the Neck's residents wishing to become converted to West Gardinerism is obscure. It has been suggested that perhaps taxation might have had something to do with it, West Gardiner's rate being traditionally lower than its neighbor's. Another supposition is that the Neck is nearer to the West Gardiner Town House than to the Litchfield seat of government. At any rate, the acquisition brought this town some of the first settled farms of the region, a frontage on Cobbosseecontee Lake, and some of the mills at Collins' Dam.

"JOHN COLLINS BUILT A WOODEN BRIDGE"

Another thing John Collins did was build the first bridge across the Cobbossee at the mills. Previously the stream was crossed by fording, when the water was low, or by waiting until it was when it wasn't low, which was sometimes just as awkward as it sounds.

Fires have plagued the Collinses ever since they came to West Gardiner. In 1860 the sawmill and the carding mill went up in smoke. The sawmill was replaced and in 1870 Collins built a five-story building 100 feet by forty, according to one account, which he leased to out-of-towners as a furniture factory for $100 per year. The factory employed forty "hands" in winter and thirty in summer. Its specialty was bedsteads, but it made other furniture, too. Tables, for one thing. A portion of the building now occupied by the Grange at French's Corner was once the shed in which lumber was dried for the furniture factory at Collins' Mills. It's another of West Gardiner buildings which isn't where it used to was, you see.

The furniture factory was operated under the name of P. M. Fogler & Company when it burned, in 1878. The same fire demolished the new sawmill and the new gristmill which had risen from the ashes of the old.

There have been more tanneries at Collins' Mills than you could shake a stick at.

It was a good location, because there was plenty of water handy to go into the tanning solution, and there was power to run the "bark mill." But most of all, there was an unfailing supply of good hemlock bark, almost as important as the green hides, in the early tanning process.

Hemlock bark, a by-product of the extensive lumbering of early days, was dealt in in sufficient volume to warrant a Surveyor of Wood and Bark as one of the town officers. We still have the office today, although the settling of disputes over transactions in bark is no longer one of its principal duties. Ervin Horne has held this office for years, and his father and his uncle held it before him.

Sheepskins were the hides most tanned in this old industry on the Cobbossee, and Boston was the principal market. The hides came in hogsheads, green, to Gardiner by steamboat in summer and by railroad in winter and the leather returned to Boston over the same route. In the early days skins and leather were hauled to and from Gardiner in great, rumbling carts drawn by oxen.

According to Kingsbury and Deyo the first tannery at the mills was built about 1815 by Daniel Winslow, who tanned leather there for about twenty-five years. Archibald Horne bought Winslow's tannery, tore it down, built a larger one, where he specialized in tanning sheepskins for about thirty years. Isiah Hawks bought the tannery, ran it about two years, sold to Moses Stephens, who ran it nine years, and then it was back in the Horne family again, coming into the hands of William Horne, Archibald's nephew, about 1870. When William died a second Archibald and Eben, his brothers, ran the business under the name of Horne Brothers. In 1881 they built two buildings, each forty feet square, with steam power, and stepped up production to 7,500 dozen sheepskins per year. They employed four men the year 'round. The price of bark varied between $6.00 and $10.00 per cord. Archibald Horne ran the business until about 1929, when it was torn down and its pieces joined the other restless buildings, being moved to Gardiner where it became a laundry, so it is said.

ARCHIBALD HORNE TANNERY

Other tanneries, listed as being in West Gardiner by William E. S. Whitman's Wealth and Industry of Maine, for the year 1893 are: Lorenzo Chamberlain, who tanned 6,000 dozen sheepskins valued at $24,000 and employed four men twelve months out of the year at an average wage of $10 per week; and James H. Buck who tanned about 4,000 dozen skins. Chamberlain employed water power, Buck used steam. These two tanneries, alone, paid $4,250 in wages and $5,000 for bark per year, and that is one of the reasons why the north end of town was a right prosperous community, in the days that are gone.

But prosperous as it was, Collins' Mills almost achieved greater height.

That was when the Bates Manufacturing Company wanted to erect a textile mill here, so it is said, and the Maine Central Railroad is reputed to have run a preliminary survey for a branch line from Lewiston to Hallowell, with a station and siding to be at Collins' Mills, and Governor Joseph R. Bodwell, the same who was one of the kingpins in the Hallowell Quarries that did an annual business of a quarter of a million dollars and employed three to four hundred men, was an interested party.

All this was somewhere in the neighborhood of 1887, and none of it came to pass—some say because of the death of Governor Bodwell, others that it was because Frank Collins did not choose to sell because of the wish in his heart that the property which John, his father, had developed, should remain in the family.

But this was not to be, either, for times changed, an era passed, and for $3,000 a deed was passed to James and Rose Carver, of Gloucester, Mass., and never once again was the right to harness the old Cabbassa's flow to rest within the town of West Gardiner. This deed was dated December 18, 1903.

About two years later, September 25, 1905, the Carvers of Massachusetts transferred their deed to the Gardiner Water Power Company, another out-

of-towner, and it is to this company that the old Collins' Dam is now assessed, at a valuation of $2,200.

Wherein lies a long tale which we'll try to condense:

In the 1920's many Maine rural areas were complaining that electric light and power lines weren't being extended into the countryside fast enough. West Gardiner, always ready with a goodly basso to join any chorus of complaint, was one of these. The Spear's Corner area was electric lighted early in the '20's but the lines were coming into the north end of town "no faster than you could whip a toad," which wasn't quite up to the speed desired.

Litchfield became weary of waiting and some of its homes were cheered and comforted by the glow from a local waterpower electric plant.

West Gardiner voted "aye" to Article Ten in the Warrant for Town Meeting of March, 1921, which read:

"To see if the town will vote to buy or lease the water power at Collins' Mills for the purpose of developing light, heat and power for the benefit of the people of West Gardiner or take any action thereon."

The selectmen, as usual, were instructed to consider themselves a committee and in this capacity they set out to see if some of that water that was flowing off down to Gardiner couldn't be set to performing some chores for West Gardiner, while it was about it.

COLLINS DAM

Chairman of the Board then was Archie D. Cole and the other selectmen were Basil U. Gordon and Reuben L. Snowe.

The Gardiner Water Power Company then was comprised of the S. D. Warren, the Hollingsworth & Whitney and the Central Maine Power Companies.

The Gardiner Water Power Company declined to lease or sell the water

power privileges at Collins' Dam even though the selectmen offered $5,000, which was more than double the assessed valuation.

Whereupon the Board of Selectmen upped the valuation from $2,200 to $5,000, which increased the tax on the idle property from an annual $79.20 to one hundred sixty-five dollars, even money.

The Cobbossee continued to flow through West Gardiner without turning any wheels and the increased tax dollars continued to flow into the town coffers until somewhere in the neighborhood of the year 1929, when Central Maine Power service was extended to the north end of town. This was about the time when Maine voters, in referendum, decided that power generated by Maine rivers should not be sold out of state, if you recall.

And then a howl went up which is said to have been the biggest howl that ever was heard on the old Cabbassa since the Injuns clove its disputed waters in their war canoes. And the assessed valuation of Collins' Dam was reduced to its former $2,200, where it remains today.

Another elegant tale of water power rights and out-of-town owners thereof concerns Joseph L. Spear, he who once lived in a house, now gone, which was directly opposite the house where Sidney M. Gray, selectman, now resides, a stone's throw from Spear's Corner, on the Bog Hill Road.

Spear fathered eleven children of whom two are living in town today; Richard Harry Spear, on the Benson Road; and Mrs. Florence Farr, whom you've met hale and hearty after ninety-and-one years lived mostly in the Farr's Cove area of the "Homely Strip."

Joseph Spear had a small sawmill at the foot of Bog Hill before Horseshoe Pond was flowed by Gardiner people, when a brook sufficiently sturdy to turn a waterpower wheel was there. He taught discipline and other subjects at the old Spear's Corner School, when it stood on the present site of A. D. Cole's store. With a blow of his fist Joseph Spear once put to sleep a man who attacked him with a butcher knife.

Joseph Spear was a man of some reputation even before he moved to the Collins' Mill region, about 1865, and opened a grocery store and hired a sawmill and ran them both.

JOSEPH L. SPEAR SAWMILL

About 1872 Spear moved to the rips about a mile above Collins' Dam, built a stone dam of his own, a bridge across the stream, and a sawmill with an up-and-down saw. The property was close to the Manchester line, on a millsite privilege which had been reserved by R. H. Gardiner and which had come under the control of Josiah Maxcy, a prominent man of Gardiner, or of one of the many corporations in which he was interested.

The story goes that Spear and Maxcy had made a dicker over water rights at the Rips but that both being men of their word, had neglected to pay a lawyer to make out the papers. Upon Maxcy's death his successor declined to continue the arrangement and Joseph Spear had to watch out-of-town owners derrick his stone dam away.

There appears to have been some sort of arrangement made, however, for later Spear built a log dam and operated his mill without interference except that every now and then the owners of the water rights would remove a few logs from Spear's dam "just to show they had the right to do so."

Spear built, near his sawmill on the west bank, a building where the Horne Brothers, Archibald and Eben, operated a tannery for a short time. Later Spear turned the building into a furniture factory, where he made end tables and shoe racks. He also built a paint shop and a house on the east bank.

He carried on these enterprises until his death in 1900. The old Spear sawmill has since been operated successively by Clarence Getchell, Frank Choate, Charles Mason and Louis Nason, who purchased it in 1923 and ran it until 1943 when it was torn down and the machinery moved to Winthrop.

And so the old mills are gone—the ones that were and those that might have been. The controversy over rights to water power in West Gardiner is an issue dead and buried these long years, and likely will not rise again.

But still the welkin rings with howls of protest over the poor old Cabbassa's flowage.

New enterprises have come to take the place of industries that have withered. Camps for boys and girls, summer hotels, resorts and cottages, and just plain residents have come to the shores of waters that flow from Readfield to the Kennebec.

An association of property owners on Cobbosseecontee Lake organized and recently negotiated with owners of the flowage which resulted in the lake level remaining reasonably high and constant throughout the summer season.

But those below the Cobbosseecontee's Outlet derive no benefit.

From Collins' Dam downstream and through the Horseshoe and the Pleasant Ponds to New Mills Dam at Gardiner, residents and cottagers complain of waters that rise and lower like the tides, though with not their regularity nor reason.

West Gardiner intervale owners sadly contemplate their deeds wherein the clause: "Reserving to the owners of the dams on the Cobbossee Conte River the right of privilege of flowing said land forever, by the waters of the Cobbossee Contee River," bespeaks the fact that long, long ago the right to full enjoyment of the shore was sold down the river.

In addition to industries previously mentioned the following are included under the heading "Business Cards" on a "Map of Kennebec County, Me."

purporting to be "from the actual surveys by Baker & Co., published by J. Chase, Jr., Philadelphia and Augusta." The date is 1856:

J. & N. Knox, Stone Masons and Cutters, lived about where Stephen A. Mills now lives, Pond Road; D. Fuller, Joiner & Architect, lived at Maurice Fuller place, Brown's Corner; W. Fuller, Joiner & Architect, lived near Brown's Corner in the old Ellsworth Peacock place, now occupied by Mrs. Minnie Pitts; J. Woodbury, Carriage Maker, lived near French's Corner, in place now occupied by Merle Fuller;

O. S. Edwards, Blacksmith, lived in house now occupied by Zebadee Allen, near Brown's Corner; Daniel Robinson, Astronomer, Brown's Corner, where Orland Martin now lives, later on Benson Road where Alfred Brann now lives, edited and published The Maine Farmer's Almanac, wrote textbooks; J. Hodgkins, Master Ship Builder, Pond Road, where Harry Howard now lives; U. Briery, Shoemaker, Pond Road on Robert Smith place; J. Smith, Ship Carpenter, south side of Pond Road, foot of Brimstone Hill;

G. Malcomb, Ship Carpenter, Pond Road, where J. Earnest Dunn lives now; J. D. Wakefield, Stone Cutter, High Street, probably Charles Curtis place.

And there were other industries, not beholden to the water rights, in old West Gardiner days.

There was one Samuel H. Parsons, cordage maker, whose rope walk near Merrill's Corner was one of the "public and conspicuous places" where warrants for town meetings were posted from the 1850's until late in 1870. Samuel Parsons was prominent in town affairs during this period.

Earlier, we told how a Pope family moved to High Street and built brick houses. The first of the name here was Elijah and he came from Stoughton, Mass. in 1816, and settled across the road from the brick house he later built. Hiram, Elijah's son, was a farmer and so was Hiram's son, George, who built what appears to have been West Gardiner's only commercial cannery.

POPE HOME AND CANNERY

The cannery was across the road from the brick house and in 1890 produced 28,000 cans of corn and 1,700 of pumpkin, which sold for $2,600, a pretty penny for those days. The cannery was just about the only industry ever in West Gardiner which furnished work for women outside their homes. Thirty persons were employed in the cannery, in season. Pope raised much of what he canned and he made his own tin cans, so it is said.

The heirs of George Pope sold the "cannery farm" to A. A. Brackett, who sold to Fred Towle, grandfather of Lloyd Towle, of this committee. Backfiring of a threshing machine engine set the barn on fire and the set of buildings burned in 1919, and the land was sold to Arthur Gosline.

There were two tanneries on the Hallowell Road in addition to those at Collins' Mills. One was on the old J. Bacheldor place on the Hallowell Road. Another was operated by John Stevens, father of John Frank Stevens, also on the Hallowell Road. It is understood that these tanneries used sumac rather than Hemlock bark for the tanning process. Present residents theorize that the heavy growth of sumac in that area may be the result of seeds coming in with the sumac for tanning.

The West Gardiner Observer, a semi-monthly newspaper, was published in West Gardiner by Ellsworth E. Peacock in 1889. It suspended two years and was then "Published every Saturday" in the Winthrop Banner office, for a time. The price was two cents per copy, thirty-five cents per year, "in advance."

About sixty-five years ago one Bert Page made and repaired harnesses in a building on Goddard's Lane now owned by Harold Thompson.

Many grocery stores have been operated in West Gardiner through the years.

The last store at French's Corner was run by the late Frank E. Towle, prominent in the Grange and in the town, until his death in 1949.

The late Charles Green ran a grocery store at Green's Hill from 1877 until 1915.

Grocery stores in town now are: Brown's Corner Store, Arthur Moore, proprietor; Hallowell Road, J. Earl Gaslin, proprietor; Horse Shoe Pond Camps and Store, L. J. Mercier, proprietor; Cole's Grocery, Spear's Corner, A. D. Cole, proprietor; Dunn's Store, Horseshoe Pond Road, Laurence A. Dunn, proprietor.

But if all of the old industries have gone from West Gardiner, new ones have appeared, to try to take their places.

The Central Maine Power Company is the largest single payer of taxes in the town. In 1950 it paid a tax of $4,434.28 on 39.84 miles of poles and line valued at $65,210.

And West Gardiner collects taxes from a portion of an industry that's underground—the six miles of pipeline of the Socony Oil Company which burrows through the town to carry liquid petroleum products from South Portland to Bangor. Valuation of the pipeline in this town is $6,400, taxed for an annual $435.20. About $5,600 land damage was paid West Gardiner property owners as right of way for the line, at the rate of $17.50 per rod.

BALBROOK LODGE

The second largest enterprise in West Gardiner now in point of taxable property is Balbrook Lodge, a summer place on Cobbossee Lake with its 91 acres of land and several buildings.

The name Balbrook was coined because the incorporators were from Baltimore, Md. and Brooklyn, N. Y. The resort was started about twenty years ago and some of its guests have returned every year since the first.

Balbrook is an asset to West Gardiner in more ways than as a taxpayer. It is a good market for locally-grown produce and it employs about twenty people from this area during the season.

Other summer places that West Gardiner is glad to have are the Sportsman's Club of Greater Boston and the Cambridge Rod and Gun Club, which are offshoots of groups of business and professional people who began coming here fifty-six years ago; and Yornoc Lodge.

The Cobbosseecontee Telephone and Telegraph Company, another local industry, was organized in 1904 as the Woodland Telephone Company, with a capital stock of $10,000.

The exchange is in the home of Howard Curtis, on the Hallowell Road. The company maintains four toll lines to Gardiner and eleven local lines with 111 miles of wire. It has 125 telephones in use. It employs three operators part time and three men part time in maintenance and supervision.

Present officers are: Milan Wakefield, president; Neva Goodwin, treasurer and clerk; Harold C. Goodwin, general manager.

Automobile repair shops are West Gardiner Garage, Harry Farrington, proprietor; and Buck's Garage, Horseshoe Pond Road.

MILITARY

In one hundred years West Gardiner has seen 192 of its younger men leave town to fight their country's battles. For some there was no returning.

It is fitting that we read these names of soldiers, now.

VETERANS OF CIVIL WAR

1861-64

Andrews, Arthur B.

Babb, Hiram
Bailey, Charles E.
Blanchard, John, Jr.
Brann, John E., Sgt.
Brann, Calvin N.
Brann, Alfred G.
Brown, George H.
Burnham, Jos. L.

Campbell, David
Chesley, Frederick A.
Cole, Daniel M.
Crosby, Wm. H.
Crosly, Charles O.
Crowell, Allen T.
Cunningham, James A.
Cunningham, Richard

Denison, Oliver L.
Dill, Chas. H.
Dillingham, Chas. E.
Dow, Thomas H.

Edgecomb, John
Edwards, A. K.

Fairbanks, Benjamin F.
Fairbanks, Edwin
Fairbanks, William H.
Fogg, George S.
Forrest, William
Fuller, Gardiner H.
Fuller, Gustavus
Fuller, Geo. W.

Garland, George M.
George, Hannibal
Gilman, James L.

Grover, Alfred
Grover, Geo. E.
Guilford, Lester

Haines, Hiram
Haines, Wm. F.
Haines, David H.
Hatch, John T.
Hildreth, Robert
Howard, Chas. E.

Jewett, William H.
Jewett, B. F.

Knox, Charles O.

Marston, James
Merrill, Charles H.
Merrill, F. L.
McCausland, Geo. F.
Morse, M. A.
Mosher, James A.

Neal, Joseph N.
Newell, George O.
Newell, Geo. W.
Nudd, Simon

Page, Jacob
Page, Dexter W.
Peacock, Solomon
Pinkham, Jeremiah H.
Pinkham, Thomas A.
Pinkham, Naum M.
Potter, Rosco H.
Potter, Simeon
Potter, John A.
Potter, Emeral M.
Potter, Ansyl

Reed, George F.
Roberts, Gardiner, Jr.
Robinson, James M.
Robinson, James W.
Ross, George

Sampson, Alonzo
Seavey, Elizha P.
Small, Oliver R.
Small, Charles
Smith, Hubbard C.
Spear, Alvin
Spear, Richard H.
Spear, Franklin
Spear, Joseph M.
Spear, Charles
Spear, Justin F.
Spear, John, 2nd
Spear, Joseph F.
Spear, Milton C.
Spear, John A.

Todd, Gardiner
Trafton, Joseph

Wendingbury, F.
Whitten, Elbridge E.
Whittier, Albert W.
Williams, Nicholas

VETERANS OF SPANISH WAR

1898

Jones, John C.
Merrill, Harry R.
Spear, Lawrence

VETERANS OF MEXICAN BORDER WAR

1916

Goldsmith, Ersley L.
McCaslin, Harvey H.

VETERANS OF WORLD WAR I

1917-1919

Andrews, William M.	4-168-322	Hopkins, Raymond S.	2,728,958
Bentley, Albert E.	111-52-35	Hopkins, Wallace E.	2,725,158
Bentley, Chester A.	1,221,682	Richardson, Ray C.	4,181,252
Cannon, Louis E.*	3,162,459	Spaulding, Donald W.*	67392
Carr, Dexter E.	2,728,836	Snowe, Aubrey E.	
Dunn, James E.	2,728,853	Wakefield, Ivory W.*	3,162,438
Goldsmith, Ersley L.	4,915,995	Williams, Arthur	3,162,435
Hopkins, Leland S.	388,398		

*Killed in action or died as result of service.

(Registration Numbers included at request Veterans' Administration.)

VETERANS OF WORLD WAR II

1940-45

Adams, Guy L.	31-400-662
Allen, Leon E.	31-321-081
Anderson, Earl K.	209-24-72
Babb, Everett L.	927-01-50
Babb, Louis W.	31-402-568
Babb, Maurice L., Jr.	822-95-15
Beckwith, Earl W.*	39-56-54
Bickford, Arnold E.	927-13-25
Bickford, Paul	209-15-25
Cain, Eldred P.	31-460-260
Carr, Carl E.	823-05-06
Carr, Dexter E., Jr.	209-31-64
Carr, George A.*	31-218-932
Colby, George N.	31-216-426
Colby, Richard D.	31-400-677
Cole, Melvin S.	31-322-609
Dale, Theodore E.	31-321-033
Dunn, Richard E.	31-400-538
Emery, Donald A.	31-101-345
Farrington, Kenneth A.	31-513-217
Fellows, Leon R.	31-496-192
Fisher, Allen J., Jr.	203-95-20
Fisher, Milfred D.	927-04-12
Fuller, Lewis S.	11-027-971
Fuller, William B.	11-122-688
Gordon, Paul A.	11-029-476
Gosline, Arthur N.	823-04-94
Gravel, Paul J.	20-145-789
Greenleaf, Richard M.	31-400-106
Greenleaf, Robert E.	31-399-425
Hescock, Francis P.	0-696-569
Howard, George W.	31-472-495
Howard, Paul L.	823-0091
Johnson, Karl G.	209-0512
Jones, Dorothy Peacock	
Krumen, Alfred	11-016-624
Landry, Napoleon J.	823-01-07
Little, William, Jr.	705-1914
Long, Arthur F., Jr.	11-122-244
Long, Hope N.	753-420
Ladner, Carmen S.*	31-217-634
Ladner, Lorne W.	31-116-901
Martin, Arthur	209-33-76
Martin, Walter	31-220-268
Mason, Herbert C.	31-117-474
McCausland, Harold L.	
Mooradian, Chas. J.	31-220-233
Mooradian, John R.	823-09-53
Morse, Paul H.	11-029-333
Nason, Donald A.	
Nason, Kenneth G.*	31-220-290
Peacock, George B., Jr.	553-597
Peacock, William F.	209-38-20
Pierson, Thomas J., Jr.	209-41-73
Pettingill, Janet M.	N722916
Quilici, Arlene Hescock	A100587
Rolfe, Laurence M.	823-1701
Rogers, Irvin L.	209-63-84
Shea, Melvin F.	31-153-391
Swift, Carroll T.	31-116-116
Swift, Maurice W.	1-321-041
Small, Herbert F., Jr.	11-068-339
Small, Philip R.	31-220-270
Trafton, Fred P.	275-086
Trafton, Lorimer J., Jr.	164-469
Thompson, John F.*	31-322-585
Thompson, Maxwell E.	31-220-256
Thompson, Lawrence C.	31-153-970
Van Orman, Chester W.	11-016-796
Van Orman, Frederick W.	208-76-79
Wakefield, Forest L.	31-098-847
Ware, Elmer M.*	31-045-492
Ware, Richard I.	0-2029286
Wentworth, Stanley E.	11-122-056
Weston, Roger F.	0-800623
Wiles, Lloyd E.	11-123-146
Willard, George O.	31-402-758
Williams, Fred L.	209-67-82
Woodworth, James R.	20-145-777

*Killed in action or died as result of service.

Registration numbers included at request Veterans' Administration.

SCHOOLS

Some mighty fine people have lived in West Gardiner during the past one hundred years. And some of another feather, too. In that respect the town hasn't changed much, nor has the nation, nor the world, either, for that matter. From all we can make out, human nature is human nature, in whatever century it flowers.

One of the more fragrant blossomings is the universal desire on the part of parents to give their children a better chance in life than they, themselves, had. Some pretty good examples of this trait, and its results, are to be found in a study of the school system of West Gardiner.

One hundred years ago there were 615 children of legal school age in West Gardiner. Less than half went to school. The majority, both boys and girls, worked on the farm, or elsewhere. West Gardiner was no worse than most other towns in this respect. The percentage was just about the same for the rest of the state—until the Compulsory Education law was strengthened and stricter enforcement was begun, after 1887.

According to town records common school education in 1850 cost the taxpayers less than $2.00 per scholar. There were 264 in school that year. The first appropriation for common schools was $914.15, of which $410.18 apparently was not used. For several years the town appropriation for common schools varied between $800 and $1,000 and was sometimes as low as $500 per year. Last year it was $5,500.

High school, in the early days, was only for rich men's sons. And there weren't many rich men in West Gardiner.

In 1850 the public school system of West Gardiner consisted of nine school districts, each of which was almost like a little town in itself, in that it pretty much had the say as to what should go on in its own school. The districts had no authority to raise money by taxation, but they did decide what was to be done with the money allotted to them, as individuals, out of the town appropriation for education. Extra money was sometimes raised by holding "sociables" or by renting the schoolhouse to a singing school or the like.

At annual meetings which resembled town meetings each district decided what the school term should be, transacted whatever other business there might be, and elected a school agent to serve for the year. The school agent was a sort of board of selectmen, on a small scale. He listened to complaints. He bought the wood for fuel, saw that it was stored under cover. He bought the annual broom, the water bucket and the tin cup. He hired the teachers and he looked after things in general. He made an annual report to the School Superintendent, the Superintending School Committee, or whatever authority the town might have set up for the general supervision of schools.

The school year was divided into a summer and a winter term, generally of from ten to twelve weeks each, and each district decided for itself what the duration of the terms should be. Often the winter term did not begin until early December, to permit the older boys to help with the harvest. One old record of a district school meeting contained instructions for the agent to "arrange the summer term of the school so as not to interfere with haying."

Mostly, the older boys and girls attended only the winter terms—they were generally working on the farm during the rest of the year. Male teachers usually taught the winter term, because discipline was difficult to maintain. The female teachers who taught the summer term sometimes were no more than a year or two older than some of their scholars. These teachers seem to have had to double as baby sitters, along with their other duties, for children as young as two years sometimes attended the summer term of school. When time came for the tot's afternoon nap the teacher wrapped it in a coat and put it to sleep on a bench.

Male teachers were paid $20 per month and females $1.57 per week, in 1850.

The schools were small, gloomy, one-room structures with an even smaller building out back, where information not in the curriculum was recorded on the walls. The schoolroom was heated by a woodstove operated, usually, by one of the scholars, who picked up a few pennies during the winter by coming to school early and lighting the fire. Seats were benches and desks were taller benches. There were benches without desks down front, for "recitation." The teacher sat at a desk on a dais and tried to keep an eye on everything that went on, which was considerable. There were sometimes forty-five healthy, mischievous scholars. Measles often closed the schools for unscheduled vacations of two weeks or longer.

Not all of the subjects of today were taught, but when a scholar was graduated from the old common school he could spell a few every-day words and he could "cipher," and he knew something about history, and geography.

Maintenance of discipline among the older boys often was a serious problem. Joseph L. Spear, who taught winter terms at the Spear's Corner School before the turn of the century was not a large man but he was "withy." The older boys raised particular Ned, as they used to say, the first day of Prof. Spear's teaching. The following morning the new teacher addressed his classes: "Yesterday, you scholars taught the school." Then he leaped into the air and kicked the ceiling. "But from now on, I'm going to teach it!"

And he did.

The nine schoolhouses in 1850 were: Milliken School, High Street, near the Gardiner line; McKinley School, about two miles further out High Street; Brown's Corner School; Washington School on Hallowell Road (name later changed to John F. Stevens School); Lincoln School, Litchfield Neck; Spear's Corner School; Indiana Road School; Ripps School, on Horseshoe Pond Road near Merrill's Corner; Jaquith School, Pond Road.

Reason for so many schoolhouses was to reduce the distance for scholars to walk.

A perusal of old school records reveals that most of today's gripes and complaints from scholars, parents, taxpayers and teachers were being uttered a century ago.

The following excerpt taken from the report of Alvin Brann, agent for District No. One in 1873 is just about the sort of thing that was said about some of our schools as late as 1948, when the new Consolidated School went into use:

"We think no one would use this schoolroom as a pig pen without first stopping some of the air holes. The scholars cannot have suffered for want of pure air this winter, though they undoubtedly have from cold feet."

Report of Charles Roberts, District No. Two Agent: "The teacher for the summer term was Miss Laura E. Spear, of this town. The trouble with this school was the bountiful crop of berries, together with the apathy of the parents, who allowed the scholars to go berrying instead of attending the school. We think the teacher a good one, but the school was unprofitable."

The report of the School Committee for the same year, 1873, has a modern sound: "We would recommend more interest by parents and better schoolhouses. Districts One (Milliken), Three (Stevens) and Four (Brown's Corner) are positively unfit for schoolhouses in their present condition. They are old, inconvenient and dilapidated, mere apologies for houses. We should take some measures immediately to replace these hovels for new and comfortable schoolhouses. We would recommend the idea that Districts No. Three and Four unite and build one house near the center of the two districts, and by that means have the same amount of money for one school that we now have to divide with two."

The School Committee members who had the "consolidation" idea more than three-quarters of a century ago were: E. P. Seavey, G. W. Blanchard and John A. Spear.

MERRILL SCHOOLHOUSE

There was doubtless some justification for the complaints of school authorities concerning the condition of some of the schoolhouses, for at least one of them was used for more than one hundred years.

This building, sometime known as the "Merrill Road Schoolhouse" was one of the first built in old Gardinerston, in 1794. It remained near the town line until 1816 and then, like so many of West Gardiner's buildings, it took up its bed and walked. The new location was further out High Street, on land then owned by Elijah Pope. In 1836 the population had outgrown

the school and the district was divided, and the Milliken School was built on High Street, two miles nearer Gardiner. The same teacher taught both schools, with the hours of instruction so arranged that scholars could attend both sessions, thus obtaining twice the amount of instruction. There is no indication that the scholars rejoiced at this arrangement.

In 1840 the poor old building again moved its creaking joints to the site where it was later replaced by the McKinley School, which was near the Community House, then known as the Second Freewill Baptist Church on High Street where, according to a story in the Lewiston Journal of 1897, "it peacefully rested for 57 years." According to the Lewiston Journal: "it has not only served the district and town as a schoolhouse, but its hospitable roof has sheltered many a poor tramp from the searching storms. As a result of the frequent visits by tramps the 'old knowledge box' has been on fire several times."

The interior of this old schoolhouse was remodelled a few times but in 1897, according to the Journal: "it has the identical walls, and the outward appearance is the same as it was a hundred years ago."

But even though criticism of the schoolhouses has perhaps been justified through the years, the quality of instruction has been high, as evidenced by the scholastic honors West Gardiner students consistently have achieved at Gardiner High School.

There's no way you can start an argument any quicker in the average Maine town than to say something for or against its schools, unless you say it about the roads. West Gardiner is about average in this respect, and if the paintwork in the Town House is scorched a little bit around the edges it is undoubtedly the result of some of the school debates at town meetings.

West Gardiner wasn't old enough to shave before a few courageous souls began talking about a high school for the town. Just how many whiskers were singed in the ensuing argument is not recorded, but when the town failed to vote such a school, and the funds to launch it, a few headstrong ones took the bit in their teeth and decided that West Gardiner was going to have some kind of a high school, even if it had to be an academy.

Accordingly, on the Eighteenth day of March in the year Eighteen hundred and sixty-four, the Trustees of West Gardiner Academy paid unto one Thaddeus Spear the sum of $25.00, receiving a deed for a lot at Spear's Corner, east of the Town House Road and fronting on the north side of the Lewiston Road, and a school building was erected and baptized under the name of West Gardiner Academy.

The West Gardiner Academy Trustees named in the act of incorporation which was approved March 11, 1859 were: G. D. Wakefield, Gardiner Spear, Cyrus Bran, Joseph L. Spear, Tobias Littlefield. Annual income of the corporation was limited by the act to $2,000 per annum, "said income to be faithfully applied to promote the cause of education."

Such records as are available are singularly lacking in mention of the Academy and it is to be presumed that it was not too successful. The building was used by the First Freewill Baptist Society, Richard H. Spear Post, G. A. R., the Independent Order of Good Templars, and other organizations, from time to time.

However, by 1891 proponents of an institution of secondary education within the town boundaries were able to muster sufficient strength to induce the town to have a free high school for at least one year. (In the meantime a state law had been passed which provided for payment of one-half the expenses for construction in free town high schools, up to $500.)

"THE ACADEMY"

The school committee made this succinct report of the experiment: "R. B. Parsons, of East Wilton, teacher. Mr. Parsons is a fine teacher and gave excellent satisfaction. Good order was maintained and excellent progress made. Attendance, 30; wages of teacher, excluding board, $40 per month; board $3.50 per week." The Supervising School Committee which rendered this report in 1892 was comprised of Alpheus Spear, R. L. Snowe, John A. Spear.

After this unenthusiastic report there is no record of a high school in West Gardiner until the school year 1896-1897, when the experiment was tried again. The report of the School Superintendent, E. E. Peacock, for the year ending March 1, 1897, gives a pretty good picture of the circumstances under which the second, and last, Free High School was held in the Town of West Gardiner:

"The town had no suitable place for the establishment of said school, so your superintendent decided to hire the 'Academy' for that purpose. Immediately there sprang up, on every hand, a strong opposition to such a project. Many opposed the plan because they were laboring under a misapprehension of what a benefit such a school would be; a few opposing it purely

from personal motives. When the many had the matter made plain to them they readily acquiesced and assisted; the few gave in because they could do nothing else. The school was organized and under the efficient instruction of Principal Thomas Searles of Chelsea, Me., two terms of ten weeks each passed rapidly away. The school was a success from the start. The average attendance for the two terms was twenty-five scholars, of whom the greater part took up the higher branches of study, such as Latin, rhetoric, algebra, physical geography, civil government, advanced bookkeeping, commercial law, and the like.

"The town raised $100 and the state is to furnish $100 more, which makes $200. Mr. Searles was paid $40 per month, including board, or $200 for the terms. The rent for the 'Academy' was $18, of which $16 was raised by your Superintendent, assisted by Principal Searles, by an entertainment given for the purpose. A balance of $2 is left against the town. Compare this with the Free High School of 1891 if you please.

"In 1891 the town raised $200 and the State furnished $80. With this amount twelve weeks of High School were held, or with $80 more to do with and no rent to pay there were eight weeks less of High School in 1891 than in 1896."

In spite of Superintendent Peacock's achievement of eight weeks more of Free High School for $80 less money, the town has ever since depended upon the facilities of other towns or cities for its secondary education.

By 1904 sixteen West Gardiner students were attending high school in other towns. Nine of these, or 75 percent, went to Litchfield Academy. Three went to Gardiner High, two to Augusta, two to Monmouth Academy.

High school tuition was about $14.00 per year, at this time. West Gardiner's secondary school bill for 1904 was $109.53, to which the state added $109.52.

For the year ending February 1, 1950 the bill for secondary education was $6,470, of which the town paid $5,400 and the state contributed $1,070. The cost per year of high school tuition had risen to more than $115 for each scholar. West Gardiner paid tuition for 56 high school students this year. Forty-three, or about 76 percent went to Gardiner High School. Five went to Hallowell High, three to Litchfield Academy, one to Erskine Academy and none to Augusta High School.

But to return to the old town again.

The deed to West Gardiner Academy was acquired by the Town May 23, 1901 at a cost of $849.53, including repairs to put it in shape for school use. It was re-christened Longfellow Grammar School and operated as such until the new Consolidated School was started in 1948. In 1949 Frank and Flora Rossi of this town bought it from the town for $1000.

The old Spear's Corner Schoolhouse which had been used prior to purchase of the Longfellow School by the town, and which was situated where A. D. Cole's store is now located, was sold about 1902 for $15.51 and joined the great parade of West Gardiner buildings, traipsing up over Bog Hill and into honorable retirement as a carriage shed.

The New Consolidated, or Central School, has had its ups and downs just as does any other community project in West Gardiner, Maine, or any place you care to name, short of Heaven.

The fireworks commenced with the now famous Article Twenty-two in the Warrant for the Town Meeting of March 4, 1946, which had to do with needed repairs to the old West Gardiner Academy building of other days, which was now the Longfellow Schoolhouse, and "to see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate a sum of money . . ."

During the discussion the following facts were brought out: the roof leaked; the toilets were quite awful; a new heating system was needed—in fact, conditions were just about the same as those complained of in the ancient district agents' reports quoted earlier herein—only worse.

It seemed a pity to spend a lot of money on this old building which, after all, wasn't adequate for present day needs, anyway, and—what about the other schoolhouses? They were in bad shape, too.

A committee of five was appointed to "find out what to do and to report on the cost of same," said report to be rendered at a special town meeting to be held at a subsequent date. The committee was comprised of Wendell Small, Kenneth Nott, Harry Bates, Hale Fifield, Mervyn Hatch—all comparatively new-comers to West Gardiner with the exception of the first-named.

The committee report was delivered at a special town meeting in the Town House May 1, 1946, with Committeeman Kenneth Knott portraying the advantages which would accrue to the citizens of West Gardiner, their children, and their children's children, if the town could see its way clear to buy some concrete and pour it into the foundations of a new Community Schoolhouse instead of pouring its good money into repair of any of the existing old rattletraps. The project would cost but an estimated $30,000, complete, which could be paid over a period of years, and it would end the century-old complaints about the schoolhouses—well, for a year or two, anyway, maybe.

Some citizens thought Mr. Nott a visionary and a scoundrel for making such talk in public, and others thought he talked mighty good common sense, and just about everyone said what he thought, right out loud, which is a privilege guaranteed by our Constitution, the exercise of which provides one of the more interesting phenomena of the New England town meeting.

After the discussion the vote was put as to whether West Gardiner should have a new Community Schoolhouse. The vote was: those in favor 63; contrary minded 0.

From the floor a Special Committee was nominated comprising the before-mentioned Small, Bates, and Hatch, plus Merton Colby and Roger Goodwin, to "go to the State Department of Education and get information" concerning construction. A Full Committee comprised of the Special Committee plus the Selectmen, who were Harold C. Goodwin, Basil U. Gordon and Sidney M. Gray, plus the School Committee, whose members were Marion Hinckley, Nettie Hall and Merton Colby, was instructed to execute the recommendations of the Special Committee.

The town was embarked upon quite its biggest single enterprise, to date.

The first thing that became apparent was that some money might come in handy for the acquisition of land, boards, nails and other incidentals of construction.

Authority to organize a school district and raise money for it, as West Gardiner proposed to do, can come only from the legislature and so the problem was set before A. D. Cole, then representative from this town. The Ninety-second Legislature being in special session, Representative Cole introduced, forthwith, Legislative Document No. 1225, bearing an emergency preamble which started out with: "Whereas, the school buildings which house the common schools of the town of West Gardiner are inadequate and unsafe . . ." which was exactly what people had been saying for a hundred years.

The legislature, allowing that something should be done "as immediately necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health and safety; now, therefore" brought out an emergency act incorporating the Town of West Gardiner School District, with authority to issue its bonds or notes to the extent of $30,000, which was the estimated cost of the new Consolidated School, the estimate having been furnished by the State Department of Education, along with the plans for the schoolhouse.

The act provided for appointment of three "Trustees of the Town of West Gardiner School District," by the selectmen, and outlined the authority and responsibilities of the trustees, which are considerable.

The act was accepted at a Special Town Meeting beholden at the Town House August 19, 1946, which was four years, to the day, prior to the official observance of the West Gardiner Centennial. The selectmen appointed as trustees Wendell Small, E. G. Wiles and Merwyn Hatch. Hatch resigned and was replaced by Merton Colby, shortly thereafter. When Colby resigned Paul C. Ware was appointed. The trustees today are Small, Wiles and Ware.

But it takes time to print and sell $30,000—worth of bonds, even if they are authorized by an emergency act born of a special session of legislature. And time was a-wasting.

Said the late Mrs. Marion Hinckley, a member of the School Board, "I bet I could raise some money to get things started, by popular subscription, right around High Street and French's Corner." And Sidney M. Gray, selectman, said, "I bet I could raise some money in the other end of town, too." And they did go from house to house and from dwelling to dwelling, yea, verily, each in his fashion, all throughout and up and down and around the town, and they did garner a goodly harvest of monies totalling even $400. The Grange, always to be depended upon at a time like this, contributed $75. There were two donations of $50 each, from Wendell Small and Kenneth Nott. Others gave from $1.00 to $5.00.

And so ten acres of clay land, well-bushed, was bought from Donald Farrington for $200, cash, being situated handily on the corner of High Street and Spear's Corner Road, so-called, right in the middle of the town, opposite the Town House, and the date of the deed is October 24, 1946, in favor of the Trustees of the Town of West Gardiner School District.

That fall bush-cutting bees were held.

The new year saw the successful launching of a $30,000 bond issue bearing two percent interest, payable semi-annually, and to be retired at the rate of $1,000 per year.

Work started in earnest in July of 1947, when Frank Rossi, West Gardiner resident, a contractor, donated the services of one of his behemoths, a bulldozer, which excavated a crater large enough to accommodate foundations 105½ feet long, 60 feet wide and 10½ feet high.

George Perkins, then resident in town, another contractor, donated the use of a cement mixer, a gasoline pump and some gravel; Selectman Gordon donated the use of a truck to haul water, and concrete began to pour into the forms for the foundation. A surprising number of men showed up with shovels to dig trenches for pipes, and Andrew Bates, whose farm was near the Town House, donated rocks with which to fill the trenches up again, after the pipes were laid. Almost everyone in town donated something, including the use of tractors, trucks, labor and, if nothing more, free advice.

The Trustees were cautious buyers. They paid cash and got the short price for materials. They finagled lumber for $45 when the going price was $60. Trustee Earnest Wiles, who had been town treasurer and town clerk for years, made a dicker to get the material for heating and plumbing at wholesale. Walter Thurlow, of South Gardiner, who was in charge of construction, helped save money. A flat roof instead of the type called for in the plans was decided upon, because it was just as good, and less expensive.

But even with the best that could be done by way of economizing, it became apparent that the new schoolhouse could not be built and equipped, ready to move into, for the estimated $30,000. Prices had gone up since the estimate was made, and there had been a few changes in the plans here and there, things that might cost a little more in the beginning but which would be more economical in the long run.

It was the spring of 1948, time to start building again, after the winter lay-off.

The $30,000 bond money was gone, or almost gone. It would take an additional $10,000 to complete the job. But no further bond issues could be made, nor debt incurred, without another act of legislature. The legislature would not convene until sometime in January, months too late. The town was without authority to help out.

And yet the new schoolhouse just **had** to be ready in September, because the old rattletrap schoolhouses scattered over the town simply would not do for one more year, or even a few months, without expensive repairs.

The Trustees of the Town of West Gardiner School District had a full-grown and mighty peeved bear by the tail, and he was dragging them through the thistles, and they didn't see how they could hold on much longer, yet they sure as heck couldn't let go. They were in what is known as a dilemma or, sometimes, as a pretty kettle of fish.

They got out of the soup by putting up their own money, together with that of some other public-spirited citizens.

Five men gave their personal notes for six months, for one thousand dollars each, to raise $5,000 to keep the work going until the legislature convened and amended the district charter to provide for the required funds. The notes were negotiated at the Depositor's Trust Company for cash, and the cash went into the schoolhouse.

If the legislature authorized a new bond issue these men would get their money back. If it didn't—well, the children could move into their new schoolhouse, anyway.

These men were Vernon O. Beckwith, a local carpenter and builder, Trustees Wiles and Small, and Selectmen Goodwin and Gordon.

And it was because of them that the new schoolhouse opened on schedule, in September of 1948, and the scholars escaped from the housing conditions which had been complained of for almost one hundred years.

Incidentally, they got their notes back, these men did. The Ninety-fourth Legislature increased the borrowing capacity of the Trustees of the Town of West Gardiner School District by $10,000. Bonds to that amount were issued, at three percent interest, to be repaid at the rate of $500 per year until 1955, $1,000 thereafter.

And did the new schoolhouse end the hundred-year-old complaints?

Well, no—not entirely.

No scholar has to walk very far to school, now, for two new busses run hither and yon and all over town, taking them to school and home again. The school is warm, and clean, and well lighted.

But already there are grumblings about overcrowding. And a Penny Milk and a Federal Hot Lunch Program provide subjects for discussion which the oldsters never even dreamed of.

However, there hasn't yet had to be an item in the town budget for repairs to building.

CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL

The new Consolidated School contains four classrooms of 26′ x 40′, and is so designed that additional rooms may be built on as required. The well is 69 feet deep and has furnished an ample water supply, even through these drought years. Landscaping, yard surfacing and grading of playgrounds are projects for the future. The Parent-Teachers Association is planning a lunchroom.

There is some talk of building a dwelling upon the school lot to house the principal. It has been difficult to hire a principal for the school because of inadequate housing facilities in the town.

Enrollment in the eight grades totalled 185 scholars for the year ending in February, 1950 and, according to Superintendent of Schools Russell Perry, the new system of elementary education "is running more than $2,000 cheaper than the rural school system." The School Committee for the year

just described was comprised of Nettie Hall, Helen Thompson, Nathan Fellows, Frank Merrill.

And what became of the schoolhouses that had weathered so many years of storm?

Well, the Longfellow School was sold for $1,000, as previously described. F. L. Hescock bought the Stevens School for $500 and Leland Gilman paid $325 for the school on the Neck Road. The High Street and the Milliken Schools were demolished.

Another of the old buildings to join the ancient parade of West Gardiner buildings will be the Brown's Corner School, which will become a firehouse, beside the Town House. The old Jaquith School on the Pond Road, will be a firehouse and community house.

There were nine schoolhouses in use in town one hundred years ago. Improved roads and methods of transportation had reduced the number to five, by 1948. And now there is only one—the new Central School, so-called.

And that, though by no means the complete story, just about brings the history of West Gardiner schools up to date.

"FIRE!"

Ask any rural dweller what he considers the greatest menace to the life and property of country folk to be and he'll reply in one word and without hesitation—"Fire!"

All too many of West Gardiner's old homes have raised their distress signal of black smoke against the sky, and perished because rescue would not come.

Up until very recently there was no local apparatus to respond to the call for help—only neighbors to help carry the furniture out of the doomed house.

For years there had been an arrangement with the City of Gardiner whereby its men and equipment would fight fire in West Gardiner only after the call for help was approved by a local selectman.

This has been hard on West Gardiner families who have had to watch the destruction of everything they owned, while the dicker was being made.

A quarter of a century ago the home of Frank Collins, near the dam of that name, was one of the finest set of buildings in the West Gardiner of its day. It was also the last remaining local enterprise in what had once been the proud and prosperous community known as Collins' Mills. The water power was owned by outsiders, now, and the mills were gone away. The Collinses took summer boarders in their big house.

Fire started in the Collins home, probably from a defective chimney. The flames spread rapidly, for there is always a breeze in this pleasant place where the Cobbossee plunges over the old stone dam to wind through green fields.

The family sent a frantic call for aid. While frenzied attempts were being made to dicker with the Gardiner Fire Department the tall, white house toppled into its own cellar hole, a mass of blackened, smoking ruins. The Gardiner Fire Department arrived in time to spray all that was left—the woodpile. This town paid $100 for the service.

This is just one result of the enormous stupidity with which the Town of West Gardiner protected or, rather, failed to protect itself from fire for far, far too many years. The same thing happened to other homes—too many other homes. It was not the City of Gardiner's fault. It was our own.

Many, many times an arrangement was proposed whereby the City would send its equipment without waiting for authorization of a West Gardiner selectman. But always the purse-puckered prophets of penny-pinching economy defeated these efforts. Better that half the town should burn than the town be asked to pay for a single unnecessary response by the City fire department, they held.

It was not until about 1938 that the town made an arrangement whereby the city department could respond to an emergency here without authorization of a West Gardiner selectman.

Often, through the years, attempts had been made to organize a volunteer fire department, but there wasn't interest, or gumption enough in all the place to make a go of it.

Or perhaps it was just that the time had not yet arrived.

The year 1947 was a terrible one in Maine, when fire destroyed more property than the torches of all the Indians in more than a century of warfare. The land was parched with drought. High winds exhorted the flames. Whole towns were consumed, and great tracts of forest.

The horizon glowed at night and by day the wind brought smoke from burning fields and trees and homes of nearby towns.

West Gardiner was frightened into action. Indian pumps were distributed strategically throughout the town. There was a call for volunteers, and the response was prompt and hearty, and crews were organized to patrol the roads throughout the night, from after dark to dawn. The crews patrolled in shifts of two hours, with two men in each car, equipped with Indian pumps, axes, pails and brooms. If a fire was discovered it was the plan for one man to remain and fight it as best he could, while the other went for help.

The fall rains came and the menace departed, and so did the town's zeal for adequate fire protection.

The following spring the farm home and buildings of Walter Mayo, Indiana Road, burned to the ground.

This was all that was needed to awaken the public opinion which had slumbered so long.

A small group of which Ralph Worthing, town fire warden, was a member, called a meeting in the Grange Hall April 23, 1948. About one hundred citizens attended and the West Gardiner Volunteer Fire Department was organized, with 84 members pledged to pay dues of $2.00 annually.

Officers elected, that first year, were: Wendell Small, president; Frank Merrill, vice president; Harry Bates, secretary-treasurer; Sidney Harwood, fire chief; Richard Arnold, first assistant chief and Ralph Worthing, second assistant; Board of Directors, Joseph Mooers, chairman, and David Baker, Leslie Hescock, Charles Stone, B. U. Gordon, Harry Farrington, J. Ernest Dunn, members.

An auxiliary was organized, which very promptly got rolling on the run to raise money to obtain equipment. With beano games, suppers, vegetable auctions and the like the auxiliary raised in the neighborhood of $300 that first year. The Grange backed this public-spirited movement by donating the use of the Grange Hall. It is doubtful whether the volunteer department could have bought its equipment without the help of the Auxiliary and the Grange.

First officers of the Auxiliary were: Mrs. Peggy Shannon, president; Mrs. Thelma Harwood, vice president; Mrs. Harry Bates, treasurer; Mrs. Minnie Pitts, secretary; Mrs. Edna Howe, chairman refreshment committee.

In May the volunteer company bought a 1938 G. M. C. two-ton truck chassis for $175 and a second hand oil tank for $105 and the members started putting these together into something that would serve as a fire engine. Donation of a pump valued at perhaps $200 by the Randolph Fire Department was a big boost. There were ladders to buy, and hose, and axes, and sparkplugs and red paint and an astonishing number of items that no one but a fireman knows the name of.

Today this home made engine is kept in the basement of the Central School, ready to roll with 500 gallons of water in its tank, a 32-foot extension ladder and a roof ladder, 1,700 feet of 2″ and 1½″ hose, axes, Indian pumps and other gear. It can throw 400 gallons of water per minute, providing the water is available. And it didn't cost the town of West Gardiner one red cent. Labor, material, the know-how to combine them—everything was donated, one way or another.

A second truck was bought from the town of Manchester in January of 1950. The cost was $225, with 250-gallon tank, pump, red paint—everything all ready to roll, with the exception of ladders, hose, and incidentals. This engine is an old timer, but it has given good service at more than one West Gardiner and Litchfield fire. It's built on a 1923 Brockway chassis, has two-wheel brakes and 33 x 5-inch tires. The four-cylinder engine runs on a magneto. A six-volt battery and generator take care of the starter and lights. This engine is kept in the barn of J. E. Dunn, on the Pond Road.

WEST GARDINER VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT

The town of West Gardiner has given concrete expression to its gratitude and pride in the volunteer fire department. In 1949 the town voted $500 to move the old Brown's Corner Schoolhouse to a lot beside the Town House, and to put it into shape to house one of the fire trucks. The lot, 100 x 110 feet was donated to the fire department by Matthew Hunter. The town further voted to retain the old Jaquith Schoolhouse on the Pond Road as a community building and fire house. In 1950 the town voted $500 toward maintenance of fire houses and equipment.

And so today West Gardiner has just about as good fire protection as any town its size, and better than some.

The Gardiner City Fire Department will now respond to West Gardiner calls without delaying for a selectman's approval.

This is the way the system works, today:

If you are menaced by fire during the day call the City of Gardiner Fire Department. The city department will notify the operator of the West Gardiner telephone exchange, who will give one long ring on the line and notify such West Gardiner Line volunteers as may be at home. The West Gardiner operator will then make individual calls to volunteers on the N. E. Tel. & Tel. lines.

Meanwhile, the Gardiner Department will blow four blasts of the whistle, which is the signal for the city's part time firemen to respond to an out of town call. Then the city equipment will roll. If Gardiner sends its small truck it will bill the Town of West Gardiner $35 for the service. Fee for the large engine, and crew, is $100 per call. The town pays the bill and collects, or tries to, twenty-five percent of it from the owner of the property where the fire occurred.

For night fires, call the local department. The volunteers are home from work, then, and will respond quickly. There is no charge by the volunteer department, which receives pay only when fighting forest fires under state supervision. The pay, then, is "the going wage," presently seventy-five cents per hour, for the men, and three dollars per hour for the Brockway and four dollars for the G. M. C.

To date the volunteer department has responded to about 25 calls, and not a house has been totally demolished since the department went into operation.

Most common causes of fires in this town are defective chimneys and brush or grass-burning. Often the volunteers are handicapped by lack of water in the country. There is a proposal to scoop out water reservoirs in various parts of town, as a fire protection. The volunteer department could use some help with this project, in money, men and equipment. The department could use some more members, too—honorary as well as active. Present membership is 34 active, three honorary. It seems that the townspeople might back up the volunteers better than this.

Present officers are: James Bowie, president; Jack Wood, vice president; Frank Merrill, treasurer; Harold Thompson, secretary; Joseph Mooers, chief; Ralph Worthing, first assistant chief; Forrest Wakefield, second assistant chief; Directors: Wendell Small, chairman; Richard Arnold, David Baker, Roger Goodwin, B. U. Gordon, J. E. Dunn, Rex Orser.

Auxiliary: Mrs. Minnie Pitts, president; Mrs. Helen Bowie, vice president; Mrs. Elinor Goodwin, secretary; Mrs. Anna Wakefield, treasurer; Mrs. Helen Thompson, refreshment committee chairman; Mrs. Peggy Shannon, entertainment committee chairman.

CHURCHES

A place of worship was generally the first public building to arise in early New England communities. It was the center of social as well as spiritual life. West Gardiner churches followed this pattern. The first town meeting in West Gardiner was held in the "Free Will Baptist White Meeting House."

West Gardiner Friends Meeting House, on the corner of the Collins' Mills and Neck Roads, is the oldest church in West Gardiner. Moses Wadsworth and Noah Farr were prominent in organizing a meeting in 1803 which became an established preparative meeting in 1812. The church was built about 1813 and is still in use. The pastor is the Rev. J. H. Emerson.

Hallowell Road Baptist Church, near Hallowell town line, was built in 1836. It was organized as the First Baptist Church in Gardiner in a schoolhouse at Brown's Corner in 1815. Elders John Robinson and Henry Kendall of the First Baptist Church in Litchfield and others of Litchfield constituted the council. The church convened in the schoolhouse where it was organized for some years, then in a schoolhouse nearer where the church now stands. The Rev. Robert Brackley is now pastor.

SPEAR'S CORNER BAPTIST CHURCH

Spear's Corner Baptist Church, variously known as the Second Freewill Baptist Church in Gardiner, the First Freewill Baptist Church in West Gardiner, and the Freewill Baptist White Meeting House was built on High Street, near the Spear's Corner Road in 1840 and moved to its present site at Spear's Corner in 1889. The church was organized in 1826. Before the building was erected services were held in various schoolhouses. Elders Samuel Hathorn and Josiah Farwell were among the organizers. Present pastor is the Rev. Edward Lemar.

Second Calvinist Baptist Church, organized about 1830, met at schoolhouses near Spear's Corner for a short time. No records extant. Early preachers were Reverends Bedel, Hooper, Mitchell; teachers, Elias Fairbanks, James Littlefield. (Kingsbury & Deyo)

Second Freewill Baptist Church of West Gardiner, High Street, only brick church in town, built 1841, shared with Methodists and Baptists formerly attending First Freewill Baptist Church. Building dedicated by Elders John Stevens, Thomas S. Tyler, Samuel Bush, Barnard Goodrich, Mark Getchell, Nathaniel Purrington. Once used by Christian Denomination. No longer a church. See Organizations, High Street Community Club.

ORGANIZATIONS

Cobbosseecontee Grange, P. of H. is the only fraternal organization meeting in West Gardiner today. It was organized in 1875, on the Neck, probably in the old Red School House or in the home of Jeremiah Pinkham, who was its first master. Marshal Giles is present master.

COBBOSSEECONTEE GRANGE

The Grange established a store in the home of George W. French at French's Corner and in eight years had acquired the capital to buy what was the drying shed for the furniture factory at Collins' Mills and haul it to French's Corner, with sixteen oxen, and put it into shape to serve as a Grange Hall. The store has been operated for the Grange by Albert DeFratus and Lizzie French and was leased to Frank E. Towle who ran it until about the time of his death, in 1949.

Present membership of Cobbosseecontee Grange is approximately 300. The organization has contributed generously toward the welfare of the town.

Cobbosseecontee Parents-Teachers' Association was organized at the consolidated school in 1949. Mrs. Helen Thompson is president. The membership is approximately fifty.

Four-H Clubs, organized 1947 in Neck schoolhouse, total membership 60; Knoisy Knoll Klub, Mrs. Mary Emery, leader, Collins' Mill Road; Busy Beavers, Mrs. Grace Dunn, leader, High Street; Lucky Horseshoe, leader, Mrs. Ida Ware, Spear's Corner Road.

COMMUNITY HOUSE

High Street Community Club, formerly Second Freewill Baptist Church of West Gardiner, (see Churches), made available as a community club for use of West Gardiner citizens in 1939 by the generosity of Mrs. Melvin Wadsworth. Frank Merrill is president. Membership is 50 active, 20 honorary.

Independent Order of Good Templars, a temperance society of about 1871 which had a membership of 100 at one time, under the chief templarship of Herbert Small, ended about 1905.

Ladies' Library Association was organized at French's Corner about 1886 and accumulated a library of one thousand volumes, available for circulation at the George W. French house. Officers and organizers included: Mrs. Lizzie W. Buck, Miss Flora Goodwin.

R. H. Spear Post, G. A. R., organized about 1882, disbanded about 1894, named for Richard H. Spear, killed in Civil War action. First commander was John A. Spear. Meetings were held in the West Gardiner Academy Building. Members paraded and decorated soldiers' graves Memorial Day. The Post included a Ladies' Relief Corps.

West Gardiner Agricultural Society, extant about 1875, held exhibitions and fairs at Town House.

West Gardiner Farm Bureau: Organized at home of Mrs. Edna Howe, French's Corner in 1946. The first chairman was Mrs. Marion Hinckley, present chairman Mrs. Helen Bowie. Membership is 24.

CEMETERIES

Nine cemeteries can be named in West Gardiner today. Six are public, three are private. Kingsbury and Deyo speak of an old cemetery at Spear's Corner that was disturbed and the remains removed to the Fairbanks Cemetery.

Babb Cemetery, public, High Street, sometimes called High Street Cemetery, on land purchased from R. H. Gardiner by Simon Nudd in 1810. Probably called Babb Cemetery because Miss Flora Babb was sexton for many years.

Clough Private Cemetery at French's Corner where Clough family, early settlers, are buried.

Fairbanks Cemetery, public, on Spear's Corner Road, located on farm bought from R. H. Gardiner by Elias Fairbanks, 1816.

Friends Cemetery, public, at Friends Meeting House, corner Neck and Collins Mills Roads.

Howard Cemetery, public, on corner opposite Friends Burial Ground, on land of Cyrus Howard, settler in early 1800's.

Knox Cemetery, Pond Road, private, family cemetery of Knox family, early settlers.

Rhoades Cemetery, public, Horseshoe Pond Road. Chester Rhoades purchased land from R. H. Gardiner in 1826. Also called Ripps Cemetery.

Sampson Cemetery, public, Hallowell Road at Brown's Corner on land of Captain Thomas B. Sampson family, early settlers.

Tucker Cemetery, private, burial ground of family of Jesse Tucker. He was buried there in 1846.

ROADS

The roads of West Gardiner were originally spotted trails through the woods. An old account tells of travelling by horseback from Gardiner to Purgatory "over a path that was marked by slashes on the trees" as late as 1805.

The present road mileage in West Gardiner is 31.2 miles. The following roads or lanes have been discontinued within the past thirty-one years: Monkey Stevens Lane .7 mile; Dr. Small Road 1.2 miles; Ware's Lane .2 mile; Clary's Lane .3 mile. No new roads have been added during this period.

Today's West Gardiner roads are:

Hallowell Road, from Litchfield town line to Farmingdale town line, 3.8 miles.

North Street, from Farmingdale line to Hallowell Road, .6 mile.

Benson Road, from Hallowell Road to Manchester town line, 1.1 miles. Asa Benson was one of the early settlers of Manchester, and a large landholder.

Collins' Mills Road, from Hallowell Road at French's Corner to Cram's Point, 3.3 miles.

Spear's Corner Road, from French's Corner past Spear's Corner to Wharff Bridge, 3.5 miles.

High Street, from Gardiner line to Brown's Corner, 4.6 miles.

Horseshoe Pond Road, from Gardiner line to Litchfield town line at Babcock's Bridge, 5.1 miles.

Pond Road, from Litchfield line to Horseshoe Pond Road, 3 miles. Sometime known as Pleasant Road, Pleasant Pond Road, Jaquith Road. Abraham Jaquith settled on Litchfield side of Burnham Bridge in 1790.

The ell of the house now occupied by Victor L. Litiere on the Pond Road was originally a part of the house of Barzilla Smith, one of the town's early settlers, and was moved from the stream, with a small barn, when the Pond Road was built. Another house moved up from the stream when the Pond Road was built now forms the ell of the house occupied by Mrs. Ada M. Norton, 73, widow of Edward L. Norton.

Indiana Road, from Spear's Corner Road to Horseshoe Pond Road, 3.2 miles. Several legends purport to explain the origin of this name. One is that a family started from Gardiner for Indiana with their goods in a wagon which broke down at this point, where they settled, and named the road that was later built, "Indiana Road."

Neck Road, Litchfield line to Manchester line, 2.6 miles. It has been suggested that the Neck got its name because it is a narrow strip of land squeezed between Cobbossee Stream and Cobbosseecontee Lake, like a neck. An old name for it was "The Homely Strip."

Goddard's Lane, from Collins' Mills Road to Neck Road, .4 mile, known as Farr's Lane, and other family names of former or present residents.

BRIDGES

All of the bridges spanning Cobbossee Stream between West Gardiner and Litchfield have been washed out by freshets at one time or another. In this manner have the old wooden structures gone, to be replaced by the concrete and steel bridges of the present. Three bridges went out in the flood of March, 1936; Collins' Mills Bridge, Wharff Bridge, Burnham Bridge.

Collins' Mills Bridge, at Collins' Mills, originally built by John Collins somewhere near 1854, and named for him.

Tappan Bridge, Hallowell Road, sometimes called Tucker Bridge. Also Purgatory Bridge. Michael Tappan and Jesse Tucker families settled nearby in early 1800's.

Babcock Bridge, Horseshoe Pond Road. Formerly known as Marston Bridge. Nathaniel Marston bought land from R. H. Gardiner about 1806 and was prominent in the early town. Fred Babcock owned farm on Litchfield side now occupied by his son Guy Babcock. John Babcock, Fred Babcock's father, an early resident of Spear's Corner, is said to have owned the first "riding wagon" in West Gardiner.

Wharff Bridge, sometimes spelled Wharf. Joseph Wharff, stone mason built original abutments, lived in house now occupied by Mrs. Clara Jones. His father, Joseph Wharff, a blacksmith, purchased the land from R. H. Gardiner in 1846.

Buffee Landing Bridge, or Buff Landing Bridge, at Indiana Road, condemned by man, demolished by nature, discontinued, by gosh. Thomas Buffee or Bouffee, a German, settled nearby on the Litchfield side in 1790. He was a veteran of the Revolutionary War.

Burnham Bridge, Pond Road, also known as Jaquith Bridge. Thomas Burnham, came to Litchfield in 1828. Later moved across the stream into West Gardiner. Abraham Jaquith settled in Litchfield in 1790.

CORNERS

French's Corner, at Hallowell Road, Spear's Corner Road and Collins' Mills Road junctions. George W. French was postmaster at the corner in 1844 and ran a store in his house in 1876 and served in the town government. The corner was named for his father, Enoch French, who settled here in 1811.

BROWN'S TAVERN

Brown's Corner, junction of Hallowell Road and High Street. Sewall Brown came to Litchfield from New Hampshire in 1792 and later moved to what is now Brown's Corner. Brown's Tavern here, was operated during stagecoach days. Daily stages ran from Augusta to Portland, past here, in the 1840's. Reuben L. Snowe owned the place when it burned in 1925.

Nudd's Corner, junction of High Street and old Dr. Small Road. Simon Nudd purchased land from R. H. Gardiner in 1810. The Nudd house, built of brick, is now occupied by Maynard Brown.

Spear's Corner, at junction of Spear's Corner Road and Horseshoe Pond Road. Annis Spear purchased land from R. H. Gardiner in 1804 and built on land at the corner. He had many descendants who were active in town affairs. He married Sally Hildreth, daughter of Paul Hildreth.

Merrill's Corner, junction of Pond Road and Horseshoe Pond Road. Stephen and William Merrill, brothers, settled here about 1822 on land bought from R. H. Gardiner. There was a brick kiln at the corner. Henry, son of William, built a fair grounds and race track near the stream which was in use as late as the 1920's. A set of buildings with blacksmith shop formerly operated by Walter Merrill, at the corner, burned in 1922. Ernest G. Wiles and his wife, Effie (Merrill) Wiles live in the house which they rebuilt on this site. Mrs. Wiles is the granddaughter of Stephen Merrill and the daughter of his son, Walter.

And she has sons of her own, she and Mr. Wiles, who have been shown how to rebuild a home that fire has laid low, and to carry on, and try hard and hope for the best; for that is the road the Merrills and the Wiles and the Spears and the Wares and Traftons, the Frenches, Browns and Collinses, the Farrs and all the others have trudged, the past one hundred years.

And that's all there is to it, or ever was, or, maybe, ever will be. There's good and bad in every one hundred years. And roads have ups and downs—the folk we've just been with know it well.

So thank you all, who've helped us do the best we could. We'd like to have visited longer, for there was much, much more to say.

Goodbye, and may good fortune walk with you through this new one hundred years.

CENTENNIAL COMMITTEES

General: Harold Goodwin, Basil Gordon, Sidney Gray, Selectmen.

History: Joseph Ware, Bud Martin, Ernest Wiles, A. D. Cole, Karl Collins, Viola Martin, Lloyd Towle, Edward Byron.

Publicity: Minnie Pitts, Beatrice Adams.

Program: Minnie Pitts, Madelyn Linscott, Alice Parsons.

Decorations: Viola Martin, Donald Small, Hazel Jones.

Dance: Margaret Shannon, Geo. Dore.

Sports: Margaret Shannon.

Old Vehicles: Charles Stone, Wendell Small, Minnie Pitts, Hazel Jones.

Band: Elliott Reed.

Floats: Edna Howe.

Popularity Contest: Frank Merrill, Richard Merrill.

Old Costumes Revue: Virginia Curry, Madelyn Linscott, Elinor Goodwin, Susie McCausland.

Horses: Harold Hinckley, Milton Libby, Alfred Brann.

Register: Flora Rossi.

Finance: Ernest Wiles.

Secretary: Helen Thompson.

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